ETHIOPIA Food Security Outlook

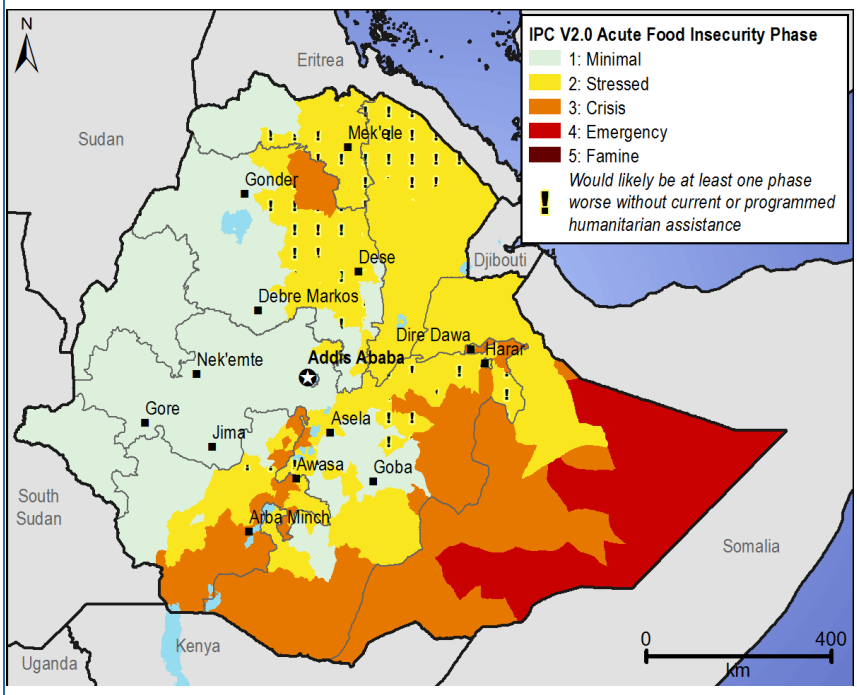
June 2017 to January 2018

Emergency outcomes likely to persist in southeastern pastoral areas

KEY MESSAGES

- The greatest areas of concern in Ethiopia are in Dollo and Korahe zones in Somali Region where poor households are expected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) through January 2018. Food assistance delivery by both WFP and the Somali Regional Government has been interrupted since mid-May, and if it does not resume by the end of July, some of the worst-affected households are expected to move into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and levels of acute malnutrition and mortality may rise further.

Current food security outcomes, June 2017



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- Following the below-average performance of the *Gu/Genna* rainy season after the failed previous season, other southeastern pastoral areas are expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes through at least November due to the poor regeneration of pasture and water resources that have negatively impacted livestock productivity and household income. The forecasted above-average 2017 *Deyr* rainy season is expected to lead to gradual improvements in livestock body conditions and productivity, improving household food and income access.
- The 2017 *Belg* harvests are estimated to be below average in most *Belg*-producing areas of the country, which will lead to a significant reduction in household food access. Late planting, particularly in lowland areas of SNNPR, has led to a two-month delay in the harvest. Poor households in portions of SNNPR, eastern Oromia, and northeastern Amhara are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through the lean period through the end of September.
- Pledged and available resources for PSNP and humanitarian assistance, associated with the Ethiopia Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD), is only expected through the end of June. Although additional funding has been committed to WFP and JEOP, specific funding levels, timing of deliveries, and the number of beneficiaries that will be able to be reached are currently unclear. In Somali Region, where the needs are the highest, the numbers exceed the planned beneficiary amounts, and emergency assistance will be required through at least early 2018. In JEOP operational areas of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR, the needs for emergency food assistance are expected to decline in October with the *Meher* harvest.

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NATIONAL OVERVIEW

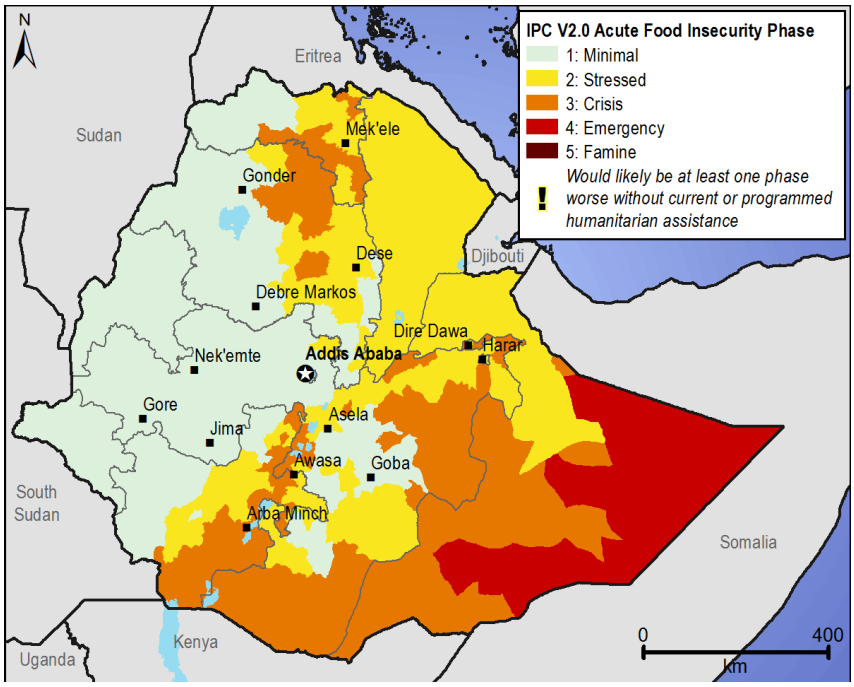
Current Situation

Nationally, food security is worse than typical due to the past poor 2016/17 rainy seasons, which led to below-average production and negatively affected livestock. The size of the food insecure population is lower than it was during the 2015/16 El Niño drought, but the needs are still high. The area of greatest concern is in eastern Somali Region. However, in other southern pastoral areas, as well as eastern Oromia, lowlands of SNNPR, northern Amhara, and southern Tigray, poor households are facing difficulties meeting their minimum food needs.

Seasonal progress. The *Gu/Genna* season (March to May), which is the main rainy season for southern and southeastern pastoral areas of Ethiopia, had a late onset, particularly in southeast Somali Region. The rainfall was generally below average, with large areas experiencing less than 70 percent of average, and in some areas of Somali Region it was less than 40 percent (see **Figure 1**). A large portion of the rainfall fell in late April and early May, and ended early in southeastern portions of the country.

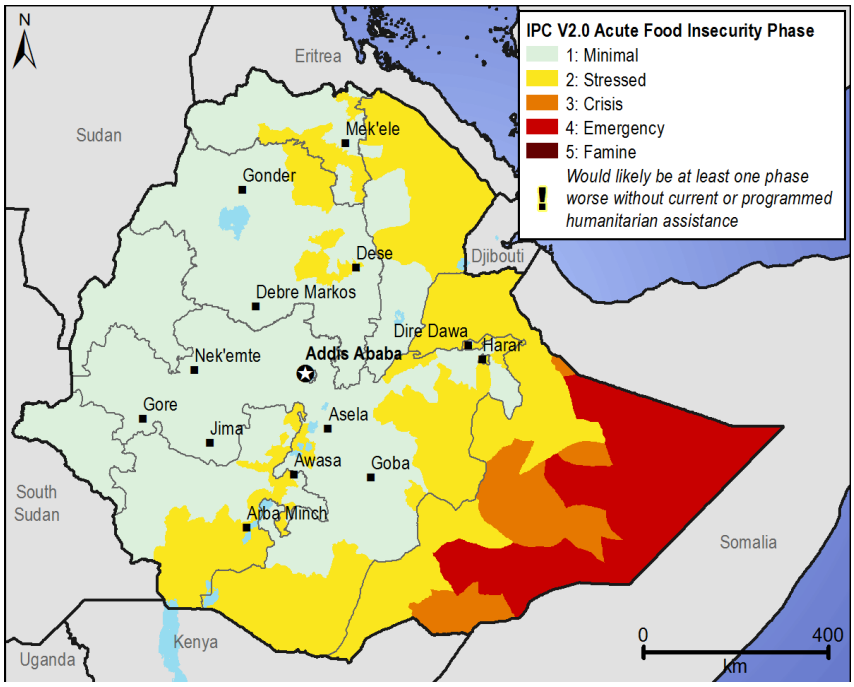
The *Belg* (February to May) rainy season was initially below average through mid-April across Gamo Gofa, Segen, and Wolayita zones of SNNPR, northeastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and parts of Afar, bordering Amhara and Tigray; and characterized by long dry spells. By late April and early May, the rainfall performance improved to more typical levels, except over southern *Belg*-producing areas, particularly in SNNPR. However, cumulative totals remained below average across many areas. The *Belg* rains continued through to the beginning of the *Kiremt* (June to September) rainy season, avoiding typical dry spells from late May through mid-June.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2017



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, October 2017 to January 2018



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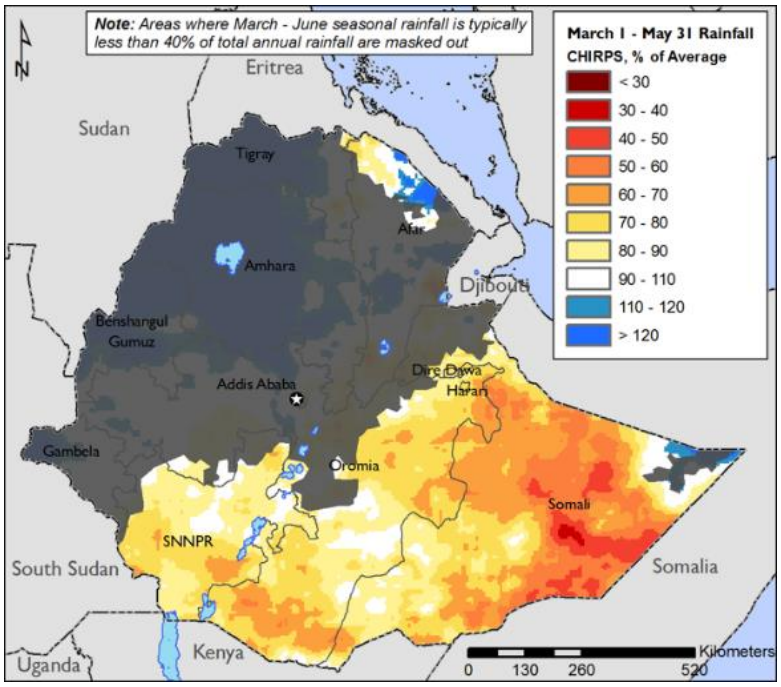
There was a timely onset of the *Kiremt* season across most areas of the country, and in some areas, it even started early. However, rainfall has not started in northeastern areas that typically begins later, during the first and/or second dekads in July. The June *Kiremt* rainfall was generally favorable across most of Ethiopia, with some pocket areas receiving below-average

amounts in central and southwestern areas, particularly in portions of Oromia and northern SNNPR as well as portions of Amhara. The western highlands received above-average amounts (25 to 200 mm).

Pasture, water, and livestock. Due to the near complete failure of the 2016 *Deyr/Hageya* rainy season, followed by the extended dry period through April 2017, significant livestock deaths of all species have occurred in southern and southeastern pastoral areas due to the poor rangeland conditions and limited water availability. However, by mid-May, due to enhanced and late season *Gu/Genna/Belg* rains, there were slight improvements in water and pasture availability in eastern and central regions. Ponds in the lowlands of eastern Oromia were not fully replenished, but the water supply for livestock increased. Households that had moved their cattle to river valleys returned to areas closer to homesteads. However, livestock body conditions in eastern Oromia have still not fully recovered.

In drought-affected southern and southeastern parts of the country, there were also marginal improvements in May, but the availability of pasture was below average since it was not able to regenerate as usual due to the severity of the degradation. In these areas, livestock body conditions remain poor, and there is virtually no milk production since livestock births have not been occurring.

Figure 1. March 1 – May 31, 2017 percent of average rainfall using Climate Hazards Group Precipitation with Stations (CHIRPS) data



Source: *U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)/FEWS NET*

***Belg* season**. Due to the late start of the *Belg* rains and below-average amounts, late planting occurred in many *Belg*-harvesting areas, especially in lowland areas of SNNPR, including Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Alaba, parts of Sidama and Silltie, and eastern Gurage zones. Not only was there late planting, but total planting areas were lower. In eastern Oromia, although the planting performance of *Belg* crops improved in April through mid-May, the total area planted stood at 50 and 20 percent of the planned 61,047 and 67,425 hectares of land in East and West Hararghe zones, respectively. However, these areas can still replant for the *Meher* season, which is not the case for lowland areas of SNNPR. In *Belg*-harvesting areas of Amhara Region, planting levels were higher. As of mid-May, about 89 percent of the planned 172,044 hectares of arable land for the season were covered with *Belg* crops. Besides below-average rainfall, seed access across the country was also a factor that led to lower levels of planting. Compared to other years, the 2016 poor rainy season and declining incomes limited the availability and ability for farmers to purchase both seeds and fertilizers.

In SNNPR, due to late planting, the green and dry *Belg* maize is likely to be delayed by more than two months, and is not expected until early August. Typically in June, the *Belg* green maize would be available for consumption. Most crops are currently at the later stages of growth. Normally, more crops would be at the flowering stage in North Shewa of Amhara. In central and eastern Oromia, maize is at the vegetative stages.

End-of-the-season May rainfall did benefit *Belg* crops, including maize, haricot beans, and sorghum, as well as long-cycle crops planted during the *Belg* but will not be harvested until the *Meher.* Also this rainfall facilitated land preparation for *Meher* short-cycle crops like barley, wheat, teff, and pulses.

Fall Armyworm (FAW) infestations. In western parts of the country, from southwestern SNNPR to northwestern Amhara, where more than 90 percent of Ethiopia's annual maize crop production comes from, FAW infestations have affected maize crop fields. As per a May report from the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, FAO, and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYIT), the pest, first reported in Yeki Woreda of SNNPR at the end of February 2017, spread to western parts of Oromia and Gambela, and very recently to Benshangul Gumuz, Amhara, and Tigray regions of the country. It is now in 43 zones and 308 woredas, affecting a total of 205,790 hectares of maize fields.

According to the same report, the damage level varies across the regions and woredas. For example, the level of damage and loss for maize is estimated to be 15-30 percent of the total maize crop for the entire SNNPR Region and slightly less at 5-20 percent in Oromia. In Bench Maji zone of SNNPR, 100 percent of the maize crop was lost. The federal government, in coordination with the respective regions, has tried to spray and prevent the spreading of FAW. However, the absence of locally-generated knowledge on FAW is reportedly one of the biggest challenges in combatting the pest.

Market supply and prices. Prices of staple food grains, particularly maize, significantly increased in April and May 2017 across the country in all local markets due to supply shortages and increased demand from both non- and drought-affected parts of the country. (This year due to the below-average Meher harvest in November and December 2016, food stocks were exhausted atypically early, which has led to a longer than normal market dependence.) For example, the May 2017 EGTE maize price in Hosanna market in SNNPR was 11.2, 32.7, and 32.5 percent higher compared to maize prices in April 2017, May 2016, and the five-year average, respectively. The April 2017 maize price data also shows an increase in Meyu in East Hararghe Zone of Oromia and Hawi Gudina in West Hararghe Zone by 25 and 20 percent, respectively, compared to April 2016.

Livestock prices, on the other hand, have been mixed. In Addis Ababa, western, northwestern, and central parts of the country, livestock prices have remained relatively stable or slightly increased. However, in southern pastoral and southeastern lowlands of the country, affected by the 2016/17 drought and the impact of abnormally drier conditions from the 2017 Gu/Genna rains, poorer than usual livestock body conditions and a greater supply on local markets, which have reduced market demand, have led to lower livestock values.

Health and Nutrition. According to the Ethiopia Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU), countrywide, the 2017 project caseload for children experiencing severe acute malnutrition (SAM) is 303,000. The caseload for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children is 2.7 million.

From January to April 2017, the largest increases in severe acute malnutrition cases have been in Somali Region, representing about a quarter of all of the country's cases, followed by SNNPR. Also the Somali Region Therapeutic Feeding Program (TFP) admissions showed an increasing trend from 5,942 in January 2017 to 7,835 in March, with a slight reduction in April to 6,795.

In addition, SNNPR monthly TFP admissions show a steady increase each month between January and April 2017. In April, TFP admissions increased to 5,518 cases (93.8 percent reporting rate) from 5,298 (93.7 percent reporting rate) in March. Approximately 15 percent of the children were in inpatient treatment stabilization centers (SC), which is much higher than the national monthly average of about eight percent, and is above the 10 percent threshold expected in emergency responses. Significant increases in TFP admissions in April were reported in Kemba and Zala woredas of Gamo Gofa Zone, Wonago Woreda of Gedeo Zone, East West Badewacho of Hadiya Zone, Alaba Special Woreda, Konso Woreda of Segen Hizboach Zone, and Dara and Boricha woredas of Sidama Zone.

Refugees from South Sudan and Somalia. According to UNCHR, as of May 31, 2017, the total registered number of refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia was 838,722. The country of origin breakdown as a percentage is 45.1 from South Sudan, 29.8 from Somalia, 19.2 from Eritrea, five from Sudan, and less than one percent from other countries. Between February and May 2017, approximately 34,958 South Sudanese refugees entered Ethiopia, nearly all of them in Gambela Region. This brings the total number of South Sudanese refugees to approximately 378,285 who have entered Ethiopia since December 2013. On the other hand, the number of refugees fleeing Somalia have fallen compared to previous months, and the total number of Somalia refugees in Ethiopia at the end of May was 249,903.

Humanitarian Requirements Document. The 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) estimated a total of 5.6 million people between January to June 2017 would require humanitarian assistance. However, in April, the Government of Ethiopia revised these figures upward to 7.8 million. As part of the revised HRD, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), WFP, and JEOP had been providing emergency humanitarian assistance that was planned and funded only through the end of June. However, as of July 21, both WFP and JEOP indicate that additional funding has been committed and secured for additional assistance, though specific funding levels, timing of deliveries, and the number of beneficiaries and rounds of food/cash aid is currently unclear.

In Somali Region, WFP and NDRMC planned to provide 1.7 million people monthly rations, but the fourth round distributions in May were only for one million people due to resource constraints. The rations per person per month were slated to be 15 kg of cereals, 1.5 kg of pulses, and 0.45 liters of oil with the expectation that the provision will provide 2,100 kcal per day per beneficiary, but due to larger numbers of people in need, particularly in Dollo and Korahe zones, the amount per person was

lower in the fourth round. In Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR, 900,000 people have been assisted by JEOP, and beneficiaries have received the same ration sizes as were initially reportedly being distributed in Somali Region.

Assumptions
The most-likely scenario from June 2017 to January 2018 is based on the following national-level assumptions:

Agroclimatology

- **ENSO conditions** are currently neutral. Based on the June IRI/CPC forecast, the most likely scenario is for ENSO neutral conditions through early 2018.
- The **Indian Ocean Dipole** (IOD) is currently neutral. The most likely IOD phase during summer and fall 2017 is positive, according to the majority of climate forecasting centers.
- According to recent international and national forecasts, the ***Kiremt*** rainy season (June to September) is expected to have an early to timely onset and be average in terms of total cumulative rainfall. It is likely that there will be better spatial distribution of rainfall over western parts of Ethiopia.
- The ***Karan/Karma*** rainy season in northern Somali Region and southern Afar (July to September) is expected to start on time and be near-average in terms of total cumulative rainfall.
- ***Deyr/Hageya*** rainfall (October to December) in southeastern Ethiopia is expected to be above average in terms of total cumulative rainfall as a result of the likelihood of a positive IOD event.
- According to the National Meteorology Agency, **unseasonable rain** during the harvesting season (October to January), which is typically a dry period, is expected, particularly over the central and northern half of Ethiopia, and it will likely have a negative effect on crop harvesting.
- In July/August, when the *Kiremt* rains reach their peak, heavy rainfall is likely to generate atypical levels of **flooding**, particularly over flood-prone regions of Ethiopia. These areas include parts of Awash, Lake Tana, Abay, Baro-Akobo, and Omo-Gibe catchments and the plain areas. Also, during the *Deyr/Hageya* rains, heavy rains in southern and southeastern pastoral areas may cause flooding of some seasonal rivers. Flooding is expected to temporarily displace households, damage crops, and livestock, and potentially limit humanitarian access to flood-affected areas.

Pasture/Water/Livestock

- Following the below-average 2017 *Gu/Genna* season, **pasture and water sources** were not able to typically regenerate so from June onwards, until the *Deyr/Hageya* seasonal rains, the availability of pasture and water is expected to be below-average. However, beginning in late October, following the onset of the rains, both pasture and water availability are expected to improve through the end of the scenario period.
- In southern and southeastern pastoral areas of the country, **livestock body conditions** and **productivity** atypically deteriorated during the below-average *Gu/Genna* season, and are only expected to stabilize and/or marginally and temporarily improve with enhanced late season rainfall. They will likely remain below average and deteriorate further during the dry season until the start of the *Deyr/Hageya* rains in October 2017. Beginning in November, it is likely that with increased pasture and browse, livestock body conditions and productivity will improve. Throughout the Outlook period, **calving, lambing, kidding, and milk production** will remain below average.

Crop Production

- ***Belg* production** is likely to be below average in most *Belg*-producing areas, particularly in northeastern Amhara, southern Tigray, and southern SNNPR, following the erratic and below-average rainfall and extended dry spells. Due to late planting caused by the delayed *Belg* rains, the maize harvest in *Belg*-producing parts of SNNPR is expected to begin at least two months later than normal. In addition, root crops across *Belg*-producing areas are also expected to perform poorly, while haricot bean and barley production might be slightly better.
- **National *Meher* production** is likely to be average since there has been adequate rainfall since the end of April for land preparation and planting of long-maturing Meher crops as well as the forecast for average to below-average total cumulative *Kiremt* rainfall that is expected to support crops planted beginning in June.

Fall Armyworm

- Unknown in Ethiopia until March 2017, **the Fall Armyworm** (FAW, *Spodoptera frugiperda*) pest has infected maize fields in SNNPR, Oromia, Gambela, Benshangul Gumuz, Tigray, and in western parts of Amhara. According to FAO, due to the extended and staggered planting seasons in Ethiopia, the maize crop is particularly susceptible to FAW, and potentially all

maize crop growing areas in the country could be at risk. The impact on crop (maize and other crops) production will depend on the Government of Ethiopia putting in place a robust monitoring system, integrated pest management (IPM) strategies for control, and a coordinated approach.

Markets and Trade

- Since typical *Belg* production represents a small portion of total annual production, the harvest in June/July does not significantly affect the **cereal supply** in central markets like Addis Ababa but it increases supply in local markets. However, this year, expected below-average production in Amhara and Tigray in June/July and delayed harvesting in SNNPR, by about two months, will affect the supply of food grains, and they will remain atypically low through September, even in *Belg*-producing areas. With the anticipated late *Belg* harvest in September and *Meher* harvest starting in October, the supply of cereals will increase and is expected to follow its normal trend for the rest of the scenario period.
- **Prices of locally-produced staple cereals**, such as sorghum, maize, barley, and teff, are likely to follow seasonal trends at somewhat above-average levels through the peak of the lean season in September 2017. Between October and January, following the *Meher* harvest, prices are expected to decline seasonally following increased market supply and lower household market demand.
- According to the Informal Cross Border Trade Monitoring System (XBT), **maize exports** to northern Kenya and **bean exports** to coastal Kenya are expected to increase seasonably through the scenario period to January 2018. Exports are most likely to be above average because of the very tight supplies in Kenya, following Kenya's January 2017 below-average harvest and the expected below-average July to September harvest in the adjacent supply areas of central and northeastern areas of Kenya.

Income-Earning Opportunities

- From June to January 2017, **agricultural labor opportunities** are likely to be normal, following planting, weeding, and harvesting in *Kiremt*-receiving regions of SNNPR, Amhara, Gambela, Benshangul Gumuz, and Tigray. However, due to the expected increase in the number of people in search of labor, particularly from June to September, the wage rate will remain low and likely improve later in the year as major construction activities in the country resume, beginning in October, after the *Kiremt* season ends.
- In general, **other household income** from self-employment opportunities, like petty trading and social support of both in-kind and cash, are expected to slightly improve during the October to January 2017 period following a likely average *Meher* harvest.

Health and Nutrition

- The reported outbreak of **Acute Watery Diarrhea** (AWD), which is predominately of greatest concern in Somali Region, but has also occurred in other regions, including Oromia, Afar, and Amhara, is expected to directly contribute to increased cases of acute malnutrition in these areas, particularly during the dry period from June to September when water shortages are likely to increase the number of cases. In addition, the disease burdens will likely force households to divert their limited income and time that would have been used to procure food to seek treatment. This will compromise food access at the household level that has already been diminished by drought.
- There is secured funding through November 2017 for the treatment of **severe acute malnutrition** (SAM) for a caseload of 303,000 people countrywide. However, funding for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment is expected to be fully depleted by July 2017, and it is unclear if more funding can be secured for the lean season period (June to September) and beyond. If no funding is secured to continue the MAM operations, this will likely increase the caseload for SAM, and there will be a higher risk of mortality.

Safety Net/Humanitarian Assistance

- **PSNP** transfers started late, so they will be carried out past June but not beyond the planned six month transfers.
- Although additional funding has been committed to WFP and JEOP for **humanitarian assistance** delivery in Somali Region and JEOP operational areas, specific funding levels, timing of deliveries, and the number of beneficiaries that will be able to be reached are currently unclear. Without this confirmed information, the continuation of humanitarian assistance is ambiguous, and these programs were not included in FEWS NET's analysis.
- As of August 1, a pipeline break is anticipated countrywide for targeted supplementary feeding (TSF).

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In **south and southeastern pastoral areas of the country (most parts of Somali, southern Oromia, and southern SNNPR),** food access for poor and very poor households remains significantly constrained due to substantially smaller herd sizes after drought-related livestock deaths, and livestock body conditions for all species, particularly cattle, remain poor. Livestock productivity is below-average, and in some of the worst-affected areas in Somali Region, there is virtually no milk production. Goats and sheep are expected to conceive in June and July but at below-average rates given the drought conditions, and will only start to give birth at the end of the scenario period. Livestock prices remain below average as staple food prices have risen and are expected to continue to rise through September ahead of the *Meher* harvest, which has led to low livestock-to-cereals terms of trade. With the forecast for above-average *Deyr/Hageya* rains, livestock body conditions are likely to only start improving by November as pasture and water resources begin to be replenished. This is expected to lead to a slight improvement in livestock prices and productivity.

Poor households face severely limited incomes and these are expected to continue through at least the dry season until October. In order to cover their food gaps, households are resorting to irreversible coping strategies, including excessive sale of livestock. In some areas this option is not even possible since some pastoralists have lost all of their livestock assets, especially in the worst drought-affected zones of Dollo, Jarar, Korahe and to some extent in Liben and Nogob zones. Some poor households are able to rely on social support from better-off households, but this is limited, and many more households have subsisted solely on humanitarian assistance since they have exhausted their income sources from livestock and livestock products. In Dollo Zone, many households moved into IDP camps to seek emergency food assistance. Household access to food and income through the end of the scenario period and beyond is expected to be constrained because it will take time for herd sizes to recover from these losses.

Due to the uncertainty about humanitarian assistance delivery, poor households in South Omo of SNNPR, Borena of Oromia, and Afder, Liben, Nogob, and northern parts of Korahe and Shebelle zones in Somali Region will likely continue to face food consumption gaps and be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through September. Then by October, South Omo, Borena, Guji, Bale lowlands, and portions of Afder and Liben are likely to improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) since the rainfall deficits were not as severe during the *Gu/Genna* season as in other areas, and the beginning of the *Deyr/Hageya* rainy season is expected to bring subsequent improvements. However, there is still the possibility that some poor households will still face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Nogob and northern parts of Korahe and Shebelle zones of Somali Region are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through January 2018. Due to accelerated asset depletion in Dollo, and portions of Korahe, Shebelle, and Afder zones from both distress sales and animal deaths, household's access to food and income has fallen dramatically. In addition, given the deaths of pack camels, other income generating activities, like charcoal and firewood production, are not possible. As a result, these areas are likely to remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) throughout the scenario period.

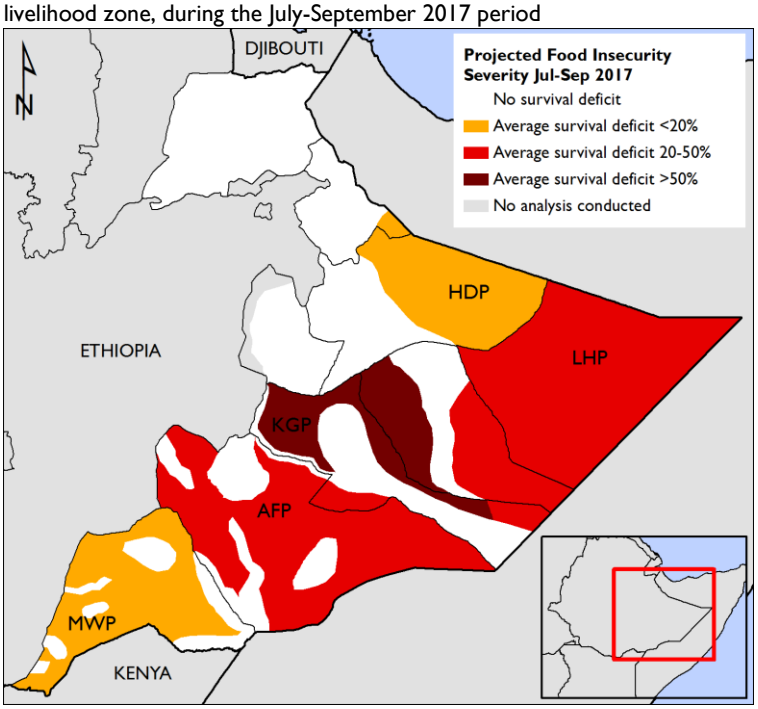
To quantify the impact of the drought on local households, in June, FEWS NET conducted a Household Economy Approach (HEA) Outcome Analysis, using the recently updated baselines for Somali Region. This analysis indicates that, even with safety-net transfers, approximately 2.5 million people will require emergency food assistance in Somali region during the July-December period, which is larger than current HRD estimates. Of this total, roughly two-thirds will face survival deficits of more than 20 percent, indicating Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Areas of particular concern include the Korahe-Gode Pastoral (KGP), Afder Pastoral (AFP), and Lowland Hawd Pastoral (LHP) livelihood zones where poor households are projected to face survival deficits which approach, or exceed, 50 percent - the threshold for Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) - during the July-September 2017 period (see **Figure 2**). In Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), even with any humanitarian assistance, households face extreme food consumption gaps even with the full employment of coping strategies.

In the **lowlands of central and eastern Oromia, the Rift Valley of SNNPR, the lowlands of Waghimra & Abay river catchment of East Gojam Zone of Amhara, and Tekeze River catchments of Tigray**, during June to September, this coincides with the typical lean season for these areas of the country. Poor households have already exhausted their stocks from the 2016 *Meher* and in June, before the expected below-average *Belg* harvest begins, there will be an earlier than normal exhaustion of food stocks. In some lowland areas of SNNPR, the harvest is expected to be up to two months late, which means that poor households will need to be market dependent even more than usual and with limited incomes. Access to income from agricultural labor is expected to improve in *Belg*-dependent areas, beginning in September, and in *Meher*-dependent areas starting in October; however, it is still unlikely to be sufficient to cover all household food needs. As a result, worst-affected

areas, such as Tekeze River catchments of Tigray, lowlands of Waghimra, West and East Hararghe, and lowlands of Bale in Oromia Region are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), while other areas are likely to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between June and September. However, with expected improved access to food and income during October 2017 to January 2018 with the new *Meher* harvest, these areas are likely to improve by one phase to either Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Minimal (IPC Phase 1).

In ***Belg*-dependent areas of South Tigray and South and North Wollo zones of Amhara Region**, with the expected below-average *Belg* harvest, access to food and income is likely to be constrained between June to September, especially as staple food prices are expected to rise through October due to lower supplies and uncertainty over levels of humanitarian assistance. As a result, Belg-producing parts of southern Tigray and northeastern Amhara are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through September. However, with expected improved food access in September from the late *Belg* harvest, and in October onwards from the 2017 *Meher* harvest, these areas of the country are projected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) as poor households will be able to meet their minimum food needs but will forgo essential non-food needs.

Figure 2. Estimated size of survival deficits for the Poor Wealth Group, by livelihood zone, during the July-September 2017 period



Source: *FEWS NET*

Note: An HEA survival deficit is the proportion of survival requirements (2,100kcal of food per person per day and drinking water) that households cannot access.

However, in the *Meher*-dependent eastern half of Tigray and Amhara regions, these areas are likely to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through the lean season period through September. Since livestock body conditions began to improve in May with better rainfall that is projected to continue through the *Kiremt* season, as well as the expected near-average production from the *Meher* season, household food and income access in these areas are projected to improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1), except in some isolated portions of South Tigray, and South and North Wollo.

In the **western half of the country in western and central Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, SNNPR, as well as Gambela, and Benshangul Gumuz regions**, poor households are projected to be able to maintain adequate access to food and income throughout the scenario period. Forecasted near-average *Kiremt* rainfall is likely to lead to near-average 2017 *Meher* production and further improve access to pasture for livestock, which will contribute to normal milk yields and livestock prices. Additionally, beginning in June, income from agricultural labor is expected to increase from *Meher*-related agricultural activities. It is possible that the current infestation of FAW could severely affect maize fields if it is not properly controlled, which could mean an earlier-than- normal start of the lean season in 2018. In addition, it is most likely that its most immediate impact would be shortages of grain supplies to eastern production deficit markets. Throughout the scenario period, these western areas are expected to remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) as poor households are anticipated to have sufficient food availability.

In **Afar and Sitti Zone of Somali Region**, recent dryness and depletion of pasture has caused atypically low milk production of cattle and camels. However, the forecasted average to below-average *Karan/Karma* (July to September) rainy season is expected to improve pasture, browse, and water availability in major rangelands beginning in August. Consequently, even though household herd sizes are likely to remain low throughout the scenario period, there are expectations that with improved pasture and browse, livestock productivity and market values will rise. In addition, conceptions are likely to increase for goats and sheep in September and October 2017. However, income earned from other sources, such as causal labor, seasonal agricultural activities, salt mining, and self-employment, is expected to remain low through January 2018 due to an oversupply of labor competing for limited opportunities. Thus, poor and very poor households in Sitti Zone and central and northern parts of Afar Region are projected to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity throughout the scenario period as

households are likely to continue to meet their minimum food needs as terms of trade improve but forgo their essential non-food needs due to income constraints.

In response to uncertainty about **humanitarian assistance** from July onwards in Somali Region and JEOP operational areas of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and SNNPR, the Government of Ethiopia has noted its intention to provide assistance in the absence of external assistance, which would positively impact food security outcomes. However, since there is uncertainty on this implementation with respect to timing, procurements, logistics, and accessibility issues, this assistance was not included in FEWS NET's analysis, but it will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as needed.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Lowland Hawd Pastoral (LHP) Livelihood Zone, Somali Region

Current Situation

Seasonal progress. The onset of the rainy season was delayed by more than two dekads in the zone and was initially significantly below average at about 25 percent of average rainfall and accentuated by a long dry spell. Rainfall generally improved in terms of amount and distribution during the end of April and the first and second dekads of May, but it still remained below-average, with cumulative season totals about 60 percent of average. However, there were areas, like Lahel Yu'ub Woreda in Dollo Zone, which did not receive any *Gu* rainfall at all.

Figure 3. Camels at a water point and grazing sheep in the poor rangeland in Dollo Woreda, June 29, 2017

Source: *FEWS NET*

Pasture, browse, and livestock conditions. There was a critical shortage of pasture, browse, and water due to the failure of the 2016 *Deyr* season, followed by the extended dry spell through almost the end of April 2017. This caused emaciated livestock body conditions and massive livestock deaths during the dry period (see **Figure 3**). According to community interviews conducted by FEWS NET, household herd sizes are about 70 percent lower than average levels due to the level of distressed sales and livestock deaths. Following improved pasture conditions from the *Gu* rains, the death of livestock declined in May and June. Pasture did not fully regenerate due to the extent of the degradation, but new grass and browse appeared in May, particularly in Bookh and Danot woredas of Dollo Zone, which has led to a concentration of livestock in these areas and significant household displacement. Significant numbers of households have relocated to IDP camps in search of food since they have lost all or virtually all of their livelihood assets. According to IOM estimates, about 90,000 people are in 35 formal IDP camps in seven woredas in Dollo Zone. There has been no official confirmation, but it appears that nearly 60 to 75 percent of the total population of Dollo Zone is displaced (Dollo Zone officials estimate the current population is approximately 700,000-850,000). Currently, there has not been a major livestock disease outbreak, but there is concern of one due to the overconcentration in these areas.

Despite the slight improvements in browse and water availability since May, livestock body conditions remain weak, even for camels, and there is no milk production for any species. Abnormal and massive levels of livestock migration across the zone began in early April 2017, and pastoralists have concentrated their livestock in areas that have received better rainfall. For instance, atypically high livestock migration was reported from Mudug Region of Somalia to Gal-hamud and Bokh woredas of Dollo Zone due to the drought conditions on the other side of the border.

Water. Below-average rainfall from the last two consecutive rainy seasons caused most water sources, like ponds, cisterns (locally called *berkas*), and hand-dug wells to be completely dry until the onset of 2017 *Gu* rainfall in April/May. Late season rainfall did increase access to surface water in some areas in the livelihood zone, but water sources remained below average. Regardless, water trucking managed by different humanitarian and UN agencies fell in response to the rainfall. However, water trucking is still being managed in all AWD Case Treatment Units (CTUs) and Case Treatment Centers (CTCs) and in some pocket areas of Shebelle, Korahe, Afder, and Dollo zones.

Markets and prices. Due to poor livestock body conditions that did not typically recover from the *Gu* rains, livestock prices remain depressed and the level of sales has drastically fallen. Most shoats sold in the markets are only for local slaughter and camels only for restocking/breeding. (Note, Regional Government and NGO slaughter destocking activities ended at the beginning of the *Gu* rainy season.) In addition, the level and volume of livestock demand for export is also very minimal.

On the other hand, staple food prices remain elevated. In May, the price of imported staple foods remained higher than previous months, while local cereal prices also increased in all markets in Somali Region due to declining supplies in highland areas of Ethiopia. For example, in Korahe market, a reference market for the livelihood zone, the price of sorghum in May was nine percent higher compared to the previous month, 33 percent more compared to May 2016, and was 53 percent higher compared to the five-year average. Thus, livestock-to cereals terms of trade have declined by about 50 percent compared to the five-year average. That meant for a sale of a goat in May 2017, a pastoral household was only able to buy 42 kilograms of sorghum compared to the five-year average of 83 kilograms, and there was a further drop in May from the April 2017 amount of 63 kilograms.

Humanitarian assistance. From January to mid-May, WFP provided four rounds of general rations for IDPs and non-IDPs (only in one IDP camp was there a discrepancy where reportedly only three rounds were provided) in Dollo Zone. (There was planned and funded emergency assistance for nearly 290,000 people in the livelihood zone through the end of June 2017.) The ration included 15 kg cereals, 1.5kg pulses, and 0.45 liters of vegetable oil per person per month with the expectation that the provision would provide 2,100 kcal per day per beneficiary. WFP has also conducted blanket supplementary feeding and targeted supplementary feeding (TSF) since May. However, WFP changed the modality for supplementary food distributions, which led to a delay in June. WFP is continuing to support MAM treatment through different modalities, including the blanket distribution of "super" cereals to 35 percent of the population (children under five, pregnant and breast feeding mothers as well as the elderly) receiving the humanitarian assistance rations.

From March 1 to May 14, the Regional Government provided three rounds of food distributions as well as cooked food in the IDP camps, but it stopped on May 15 due to improvements with rainfall and the start of fasting for Ramadan. As a result, since May 15, there has not been any food assistance occurring in the livelihood zone aside from TSF at the stabilization centers.

PSNP. Transfers of PSNP safety net assistance to chronically food insecure people, including 75,929 in Dollo Zone alone, is planned, funded and likely only through the end of June 2017. Currently, April transfers are ongoing.

Health and nutrition. The lack of food due to the significant declines in household livestock holdings due to both distress sales and deaths, combined with serious outbreaks of AWD and measles, has contributed to atypically high levels of acute malnutrition. For example, a significant increase in the trend of new admissions was observed during a FEWS NET visit to Warder Hospital in Warder Town at the end of June where 89 children under five years of age had been admitted to the stabilization center for SAM treatment and two days later, an additional 29 children had been admitted. Excess mortality among children has also been reported in the worst-affected areas. According to focus group discussions in two IDP camps in Dollo Zone and with a community leader in Walwal village of Warder Woreda at the end of June, FEWS NET learned that deaths due to malnutrition have reportedly occurred in both malnutrition treatment centers and in villages, particularly during the month of June. Note, FEWS NET was not able to obtain any specific data on mortalities due to a lack of data available from both the Regional Government and humanitarian partners.

The increases in acute malnutrition have steadily increased over the past few months and particularly spiked in June due to a number of factors, including the interruption of the wet feeding program (cooked meals three times a day in the IDP camps) by the Regional Government since May 15, limited humanitarian response for MAM interventions, delay of TSF response by NGOs due to a delay in sharing screening data by the Regional Health Bureau, which is a basis for commodity allocation for WFP;

exhaustion of household income sources, and a late referral system of affected children due to the focus on AWD response activities. The Ramadan fasting season also hindered the monitoring of the nutrition situation and active case findings. Overall, there has been a delay and inconsistency in humanitarian food distributions and beneficiary allocations in each round across the entire Somali Region, which has meant a dilution of humanitarian assistance, including TSF, as the number of targeted beneficiaries are less than the needs, particularly as there has been large-scale displacement in Lowland Hawd Pastoral livelihood zone.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions are used to develop the most-likely scenario for June 2017 through January 2018.

Pasture/Water/Livestock

- Following the below-average *Gu* season in Lowland Hawd Pastoral livelihood zone in Dollo Zone and portions of Korahe Zone, **pasture and water sources** were not able to typically regenerate, besides minor improvements following late season rainfall. As a result, from July onwards until the *Deyr/Hageya* seasonal rains, the availability of pasture and water is expected to be below-average. However, by late October through the end of the scenario period, it is expected there will be steady improvements in pasture and water availability.
- **Livestock body conditions**, for both browsers and grazers, marginally improved in May, but still are atypically poor, and grazers' body conditions are expected to begin deteriorating again by mid-July. However, following the onset of the *Deyr* 2017 rains, by late October, livestock body conditions for both browsers and grazers are expected to gradually improve through the end of the scenario period.
- Due to emaciated livestock body conditions and below-average pasture regeneration, this is expected to limit **conceptions**. Thus, during the entire scenario period, camels will not give birth but are expected to conceive during the months of June and July 2017. Sheep and goats are expected to conceive in early June and give birth in October/November 2017. Therefore, livestock herd sizes are expected to be lower throughout the scenario period.
- It is likely that an outbreak of **livestock disease**, which typically happens after drought seasons and results in mortality, will occur during the scenario period, likely during the dry season, further reducing household livestock holdings.
  The major **milk production** in the zone will be from shoats beginning around October/November 2017. Throughout the entire scenario period, there will be very low camel milk production.

Markets and Trade

- **Livestock prices** are expected to remain below average in June and gradually increase between July and September. The price increase, which is still expected to remain below average, will be more related to higher demand for shoats for the *Hajj* rather than reflecting an increase in better livestock body conditions. On the other hand, due to reduced camel herd sizes, pastoralists may opt to not sell their camels, which is likely to gradually increase the prices for camels through the end of the scenario period.
- **Prices of locally-produced staple cereals**, such as sorghum and maize, are expected to remain above average and continue to rise through January 2017. Staple food price declines are not likely until February 2018 when the supply of grain to markets in Lowland Hawd Pastoral increases from the 2017 *Meher* harvest from the surrounding crop-dependent areas as well as from central and western markets.
- **Prices of staple imported food from Somalia** are expected to remain high, and some increases are expected due to the start of the monsoon season between mid-July to early September when the volume of imported food is expected to decline.
- With expected below-average livestock body conditions and high staple food prices throughout the entire scenario period, **terms of trade** (TOT) are likely to remain low and disfavor pastoralists. However, some improvements in terms of trade are likely in July through September with increases in livestock prices due to demand from the *Haji* and then in late October, following the *Deyr* rains, as livestock body conditions improve.

Income Sources

- As seasonally expected, **social support and gifts** are expected to slightly improve during the June to September 2017 period due to Ramadan and Zakat but otherwise are expected to remain low throughout the rest of the scenario period.

- **Self-employment** opportunities are expected to slightly improve during the scenario period because of the seasonal agricultural activities in some pocket agropastoral areas.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Following two-consecutive poor/failed seasons, the livelihoods of poor pastoralists in Lowland Hawd Pastoral (LHP) Livelihood Zone have been severely impacted by the large livestock losses that have sharply reduced household access to food and income sources. In LHP, where the drought has been particularly severe, poor households had been heavily dependent on emergency food aid that was being distributed through mid-May. As of June, the worst-affected households were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) meaning that they face large gaps in meeting their basic food needs or that these gaps were imminent given recent asset stripping. If food assistance does not resume by the end of July and there is the anticipated TSF pipeline break at the end of July, the worst-affected households in LHP are expected to begin to move into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and levels of acute malnutrition and mortality may rise further. According to FEWS NET's June HEA Outcome Analysis, poor households in LHP are projected to face survival deficits which approach, or exceed, 50 percent - the threshold for Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) - during the July-September 2017 period.

While April/May rainfall has modestly replenished water sources, pasture, and browse, and forecasts for the upcoming October-December rainy season are positive, households have few, if any, livestock to sell. In addition, it is likely that once all pasture and browse has expired by the end of July, there will be further livestock deaths in August and September, further reducing food and income sources from livestock. In addition, the risk of AWD is expected to persist, particularly during the dry season, which is likely to affect the nutritional situation of children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating women. Given the lack of camel and goat conceptions during the past two seasons, milk availability is expected to remain very low during 2017 and herd sizes will increase very slowly even if the October to December rains are good. Camels are not expected to give birth during the scenario period, and shoat births are expected to be at below-average levels in October/November.

Throughout the scenario period, household purchasing power is expected to be largely insignificant for the majority of poor households since livestock prices are projected to remain low and staple food prices are expected to increase further, negatively affecting livestock-to-cereals terms of trade. Even if there is an immediate resumption in emergency food assistance, food assistance will be required through at least January 2018 to cover the significant food consumption gaps. The livelihood zone is projected to remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) throughout the scenario period.

South Omo Pastoral Livelihood Zone, SNNPR Region

Current Situation

Seasonal progress. The March to May 2017 *Genna* rainy season onset was delayed by three weeks and was characterized by poor temporal and spatial distribution, long dry spells, and below-average rainfall, less than 40 percent of normal over most parts of the livelihood zone between March and April. Rainfall performance improved during the month of May 2017, and near-average amounts were reported, leading to total cumulative seasonal rainfall to be 25 to 30 percent below average as compared to the same period last year, 2015, and the short-term mean (2005 - 2009).

Pasture, browse, and livestock conditions. The last two consecutive, below-average rainy seasons had substantially suppressed seasonal regeneration of pasture and browse in the major rangelands of the livelihood zone, including Chewbaha, Kizo, Luka, Firma, Bilbilo Gola, and Gnarema in Hamer Woreda; and Nemer, Fejaji, and Gerla rangelands in Dasenech Woreda. Conditions were already poor at the beginning of the 2017 *Genna* season and with the delayed onset of the *Genna* rains, there was further degradation. As a result of the livestock feed shortage, there were massive livestock abortions and deaths from mid-January 2017 through mid-March 2017; however, livestock deaths, particularly for cattle and sheep, generally ended after the rainy season began over most parts of Hamer, Male, and Bena Tsemay woredas. According to local estimates, approximately 30 percent of the total cattle population died. Enhanced rainfall in May began improving browse and water availability; however, pasture remains below-average. Livestock products, especially milk and butter from cattle and small ruminants, remains atypically low. Usually, on average, poor households are able to lactate two cows and five goats and sell 13.5 kg of butter. However, this year, births from livestock are atypically low due to the drought-conditions, and there is virtually no milk production. Typically household food sources from livestock products cover approximately 5.5 percent of all consumption needs, and now this has fallen to about 0.4 percent.

Water. Following the last two consecutive drought seasons, until the onset of the *Genna* rainy season, potential water points, like perennial rivers, springs, hand pumps, shallow wells, ponds, and motorized pumps used for human and livestock consumption sources were significantly lower, and most ponds in lowland areas were completely dry. Water trucking was provided in Male, Bena Tsemay, and Hamer woredas through the end of March because of the critical water shortages. The *Genna* rains partially restored water sources for livestock and human use, but they still remain at below-average levels.

Market and prices. In nearby crop-producing areas that experienced two consecutive poor seasons, staple cereal supplies have remained low, and thus there has been a higher demand for supplies from central markets, which has fueled higher staple food prices in this livelihood zone. For instance, in April 2017 in Bena Tsemay and Dasenech markets, maize prices were 25 and 23 percent higher, respectively, as compared to February 2017. On the other hand, before the onset of the *Genna* rainy season, the livestock market supply increased, especially for small ruminants, as poor households sold their animals to purchase needed food. Coupled with poor livestock body conditions, livestock prices fell. With below-average livestock-to-cereal terms of trade, household purchasing power has been constrained. The availability and production of wild foods and honey have also been significantly affected by the drought situation and remain at below-average levels. Following the onset of the rains, pastoralists reduced the amount of livestock for sale, in an effort to restock, and livestock prices, especially goat prices, rose slightly in April and May, but still remain below-average levels.

Health and nutrition. Low household food access from their own production, including livestock products; reduced household purchasing power, poor hygiene and sanitation, and underprivileged child caring practices are major contributing factors for acute malnutrition for children under five years of age, and pregnant and lactating woman in this area. According to the Ethiopia Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU), total TFP admissions in South Omo Zone of SNNPR are steadily increasing, with 353 new admissions in April compared to 231 in January 2017, representing more than a 52 percent increase.

Humanitarian assistance. Emergency food aid assistance, which provides about 96 percent of the minimum 2,100 kcal per person per day, is expected to be distributed through June for 168,240 beneficiaries in Male, Dasenech, Bena Tsemay, and Harmer woredas. To date, three rounds of food aid rations have been distributed. The fourth round distributions are ongoing, and the ration size per beneficiary per month is 15Kg cereals, 1.5 yellow split pea (YSP), and 0.45 kg of vegetable oil.
PSNP. In Dasenech and Hamer woredas, there are 48,283 PSNP beneficiaries that are expected to only receive allocations for the first six months of 2017. The first two rounds of cash transfers have been distributed, and the third one is ongoing. Due to delays in distributions, beneficiaries are likely to receive allocations into July 2017.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions are used to develop the most-likely scenario for June 2017 through January 2018.

Pasture/Water/Livestock

- **Pasture, browse, and water availability** improved in the zone, following the *Genna* rains even though they remain below-average. However, from August to September 2017, conditions are expected to deteriorate due to below-average regeneration. Following the above-average *Hageya* rainy season in October 2017, livestock pasture and water availability is expected to improve from October to the end of the scenario period.
- **Livestock body conditions** are expected to improve through July 2017 and will decline slightly during the dry period. However, following the anticipated above-average Hageya rains, average body conditions are likely to be restored by the end of October through the end of the scenario period.
- **Cattle births** are expected to remain very low through the end of scenario period due to previous cattle deaths and poor body poor conditions that has limited conceptions. Cattle conceived in June/July will not give birth until after the scenario period in February 2018. In November, there will be higher numbers of births for small ruminants, especially for shoats that were conceived during June/July, but levels are still expected to remain below-average through the end of the scenario period. As a result, poor household livestock holdings are expected to remain low through the entire scenario period, regardless of the species type.
- Despite improvements in livestock body conditions that are expected by the end of October, the **availability of livestock products**, including milk, and productivity levels are expected to remain below average, compared to 2016 and the five-year average, throughout the scenario period.

Markets and Trade

- Due to below-average livestock body conditions, demand for livestock is expected to remain low, keeping **livestock prices** below average. After the *Hageya* rainy season begins in October and starts to increase pasture and water availability, livestock body conditions are expected to improve, leading to gradually higher livestock prices throughout the remainder of the scenario period. However, the price of livestock is still expected to remain below average.
- The low cereal supply from nearby cropping areas due to the anticipated below-average *Belg* cereal production in June/July 2017 is expected to keep **cereal prices** at elevated levels throughout the scenario period.

Income Sources

- Due to seasonal agricultural activities in neighboring zones and some pocket agropastoral areas, **self-employment opportunities** and income are expected to slightly improve beginning in July through the end of the scenario period.
- Following consecutive drought seasons in the area, **social support** that normally better-off households provide to poor households is expected to remain very low throughout the scenario period.

Honey/Wild Foods

- **Honey production** and the prevalence of **wild foods** is expected to improve during the second half of the scenario period with the *Hageya* rainy season.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Poor household food and income that is normally obtained primarily from livestock sales and productivity has been significantly reduced due to the last consecutive drought seasons as livestock holding sizes, from deaths and offtake, have fallen dramatically. As pasture conditions are expected to deteriorate through the end of September during the dry season, livestock productivity, especially milk from cattle, is projected to be substantially lower. In nearby *Belg*-producing areas, the below-average harvest is expected to keep staple food prices at higher levels through January 2018, constraining household purchasing power as low livestock-to-cereal terms of trade are expected to persist. From June onwards, poor household market purchases are expected to decline due to low cash access from decreased livestock sales and lack of other income-earning opportunities. With uncertainty regarding levels of humanitarian assistance in July, further food consumption gaps are likely. As a result, households are expected to employ typical coping strategies, including consuming wild foods, relying on tribal social support, selling excessive levels of livestock, mainly small ruminants; and producing forest honey. The nutritional situation of children under five years of age, and pregnant and lactating woman is expected to further deteriorate following poor household food access from own production and constrained market purchases through October 2017. However from November onwards, slight improvements in nutritional status is expected with increased food and milk availability. Milk production from smaller animals will begin to slightly improve in November when shoats are expected to give birth, which is projected to positively benefit household consumption and incomes. Despite these marginal improvements, poor households in South Omo pastoral areas are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through September 2017 due to their food gaps, limited income-earning opportunities, and significantly depleted herd sizes. However, these areas are expected to move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) between October 2017 to January 2018 after experiencing anticipated above-average 2017 *Hageya* rainfall.

SNNPR – Most parts of Segen and Lowlands of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Sidama and Gedeo Zones

Current Situation

Seasonal progress. February to May 2017 *Belg* rainfall had a timely onset at the end of February in most parts of SNNPR, except in most parts of Segen and the lowlands of Gamo Gofa Zone, where the rainfall started about a month late at the end of March. From March through mid-April across all areas, there was erratic and below-average rainfall and repeated dry spells. From the third dekad of April onwards until the end of the season, there was enhanced rainfall and it improved in terms of distribution, leading to average cumulative seasonal totals in most parts of the region. However, Segen, Gedeo, and lowlands of Gamo Gofa and Wolayita zones received below-average rainfall amounts for the entire *Belg* season. For instance, in Segen and Gedeo zones, total seasonal amounts were approximately 54 and 35 percent below average, respectively.

Agricultural activities. Due to moisture stress in January due to the absence of *Sapie* rains, followed by below average and erratic early season *Belg* 2017 rainfall, the majority of sweet potatoes planted in November 2016 were wilted and dried by

March. As a result, March sweet potato production was significantly below average, except for those farmers that had irrigable land, including those along the banks of the Abaya and Chamo lakes, and areas that had accessible river water. Similarly, perennial crops, including coffee and enset that were affected by frost in November and December 2016, followed by drier-than-normal weather conditions in February to mid-April, were negatively impacted. Coffee in Sidama and Gedeo growing zones was particularly affected, but enset was able to recover quicker due to better rainfall levels from mid-April onwards.

The late start, below-average amounts, and uneven distribution of *Belg* 2017 rainfall negatively affected land preparation and timely planting of *Belg* crops. Typically *Belg* crops are planted at the end of February, but this year, apart from some planting at the end of March, wide-scale planting began at the end of April 2017, approximately two months later than normal. Though the normal *Belg* planting window typically ends in April, most farmers continued *Belg* crop planting with existing moisture in early May 2017 as well. In addition, due to moisture stress in March and early April, some farmers re-planted. According to the SNNPR Regional Government, the total *Belg* area planted as of May 22, 2017, ranged from only 60 to 70 percent of the average Belg-planted area. The remaining 30-40 percent of the areas are left for the *Meher* season planting in June and July for short maturing Meher crops.

By early June, all *Belg* crops were at the vegetative stages, with some at seedling and germination stages. Given the delayed planting, crops were not at the normal stage of flowering and seed-setting, which is typical for that time period. In addition to the impact of moisture stress on *Belg* crop development, the FAW infestation in Kembata Tambaro, Gamo Gofa, and Wolayita caused some damage to maize crops. However, chemical spray and worm removal measures have taken place, which is minimizing the impact of FAW.

Pasture, browse, and livestock conditions. Following drier-than-normal conditions in January through mid-April, pasture and water availability was below average in most lowland parts along the Rift Valley areas of SNNPR. Crop residue from the 2016 rainy season had been exhausted earlier than normal, which also led to inadequate animal feed shortages. The pasture shortage was critically high in the lowlands of Gamo Gofa and Segen Zone, causing many livestock deaths, primarily cattle, in March. Livestock body conditions and productivity remained below average through April 2017. There were also increases in caseloads of Anthrax, Blackleg and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the lowland areas before the *Belg* rainy season began, but no other livestock diseases were reported. With rainfall since the end of April, pasture and water availability increased in May and June, leading to improvements in livestock body conditions and productivity. However, in Segen and Gamo Gofa, pasture, browse, and water availability remained below-average levels since there was not sufficient regeneration.

Markets and prices. Staple grain prices have been steadily rising due to the 2016 below-average *Meher* and *Belg* seasons that left lower commodity supplies in the local markets. For instance, the June 2017 EGTE maize price in Hosanna market in Hadiya was 7.6, 38.9, and 38.3 percent higher compared to maize prices in May 2017, June 2016, and the five-year average, respectively. Staple food prices continued to increase in May and June due to the absence of the *Belg* green harvest that typically begins in June. On the other hand, prices of livestock, even for cattle, have remained stable in most parts of the Region, except in Segen and lowlands of Gamo Gofa, where the impact of abnormally dry conditions weakened livestock body conditions due to the severe shortage of pasture and browse, which has led to a decline in livestock market values.

Health and nutrition. Poor households have exhausted all of their household stocks, and with low purchasing power due to low incomes and a delayed *Belg* green harvest, food access is abnormally low and has led to a deterioration in nutritional status. The number of malnourished children admitted to the Therapeutic Feeding Program (TFP) has increased. In March 2017, the SNNPR Regional total TFP admissions were approximately 5,298, which is 20 and four percent higher compared to February 2017 and March 2016, respectively, but 24 percent lower than the five-year average admission. There are no reported human disease outbreaks in this area.

Humanitarian assistance. Emergency humanitarian assistance by JEOP and NDRMC is planned, funded, and likely through June 2017 for nearly 73,000 people in Gamo Gofa. The standard ration of 15 kg of cereals, 1.5 kg of pulses, and .45 L of oil are distributed per person per month. However, as per recent information from NDRMC and CRS (JEOP lead), though specific funding levels, timing of deliveries, the number of beneficiaries, and rounds of food/cash aid that will be able to be reached are currently unclear, additional funding has been committed and there is expected to be a loan from the Government of Ethiopia food reserve for JEOP partners.

PSNP. Six months of PSNP transfers (January 2017 to June 2017) are planned, funded, and likely to be transferred to chronically food insecure people in Gamo Gofa, Segen, Wolayita, Sidama, Kembata, Hadeya, Gedeo, Alaba, Silltie, and Gurage zones of SNNPR. The distributions have been delayed, so only the first two rounds have been completed, and the third round is ongoing. The PSNP ration varies per woreda, but the average rate per person per month in this zone is about 215 Birr.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions are used to develop the most-likely scenario for June 2017 through January 2018.

Crop Production

- Due to the erratic distribution and below-average *Belg* rainfall in most lowland areas of SNNPR along the Rift Valley, ***Belg* 2017 production** for all crops is likely to be below-average. Due to late planting, maize is not likely to be harvested until August, representing a two-month delay.
- Given the *Kiremt* forecast, ***Meher* crop production** for short-cycle crops planted during the *Meher* season in these areas are expected to be average. However, crops planted in the *Belg* but harvested in the *Meher,* are expected to have a below-average performance due to late planting and FAW infestations in maize fields in Gamo Gofa, Segen, Wolayita, Kembata, Hadeya, Gedeo, Alaba, Silltie, and Gurage zones. Moreover, due to erratic and poor rainfall, coffee-producing parts of Sidama and Gedeo zones are likely to experience below-average production, following the effects of the December 2016 frost and delayed and below-average *Belg* rainfall that negatively impacted growth during first and second round flowering.

Fall Armyworm

- The **Fall Armyworm** (FAW) infestation is likely to continue to affect maize crops through the scenario period in some of the areas where there will be moisture stress. These areas in SNNPR include Segen and lowlands of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Kembata Tambaro, Sidama, and Gedeo zones where cumulative total rainfall is below normal. FAW has also affected sugarcane, cotton, Irish potatoes, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, bananas, and grazing pastures. It is expected that with the forecasted average *Kiremt* rainfall in most parts of the Region, FAW could have a conducive environment to spread widely and its damage to maize, in particular, could be significant as the measures taken so far have not successfully controlled the pest.

Agricultural Opportunities

- Despite expected below-average *Belg* production, because of the seasonal agricultural activities and labor demand in state and privately owned cotton farms, **local agricultural labor opportunities** are expected to be near-normal throughout the scenario period. However, the opportunity for migrant labor for coffee picking, between October and December, is likely to be atypically lower given the expected below-average coffee production. Due to an expected increase in competition for limited labor-earning opportunities, wage rates are expected to decline throughout the scenario period.

Markets and Trade

- From June to October 2017, the expected below-average *Belg* production will cause a decline in grain supply to the local markets, abnormally leading to **staple food price** increases. However, with the start of the *Meher* harvest in November through January 2018, staple food prices are expected to stabilize and will gradually decline but will remain above the last five-year averages. June to September are typical months for maize price fluctuations. In the representative market of Sikela, maize prices are likely to be higher by 15 to 25 percent compared to last year and are expected to be 30 to 40 percent above the five-year averages.

Livestock

- The forecasted *Kiremt* rains are expected to improve water availability and pasture and browse regeneration. As a result, from September onwards, **livestock body conditions** are expected to improve to average levels, and livestock productivity is expected to be restored to average levels closer to the end of the scenario period.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In June, most poor households have already exhausted their own production and are relying on markets for needed food purchases, which are being facilitated by PSNP transfers in areas where the transfers were delayed and are likely to be still received in July and August. However, due to staple prices that are increasing and are expected to rise through the end of October, purchasing power is significantly constrained. Poor households have lower income savings since there were below-average agricultural labor opportunities for land preparation, planting, and weeding due to the poor 2017 *Belg* rainfall. Some of the worst-affected households have been completely dependent on emergency food aid and/or nutrition supports, so the uncertainty regarding levels of humanitarian assistance could lead to further food consumption gaps. One of the most challenging aspect for poor households in this area is the absence of the *Belg* green and dry harvesting that typically takes place in June and July, which is expected to be delayed, increasing food gaps even further. Levels of acute malnutrition, especially in children under five years of age, and pregnant and lactating woman, as a result, are expected to increase from June to September. Poor households are expected to intensify sales of livestock, grass, charcoal, and firewood; search for agricultural labor opportunities outside of their normal areas, cut essential expenditures further, and increase their collection of wild foods. The main food source that will be available during the June to September 2017 period is mainly from cabbage production, following the start of the *Kiremt* rains. Normal seasonal agricultural labor activities are expected to resume in July with the *Kiremt* season forecast, but due to the increased number of people in search of labor, the wage rate is expected to be below average. Forecasted average *Kiremt* rainfall is expected to improve pasture and water availability from July onwards, leading to significant improvements in livestock body conditions and productivity. Poor households in Segen, lowland areas of Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, Kembata Tambaro, Sidama and Gedeo zones are projected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes due to their significant food consumption gaps through September.

Expected below-average coffee production in Sidama and Gedeo is likely to lead to a decline in coffee labor income during October to December, which represents a significant portion of poor household income in this area. Between October 2017 and January 2018, the green and dry *Meher* harvest, which is forecast to be average, is expected to substantially improve food availability. There is the possibility that some localized areas, especially in the lowlands, may experience below-average *Kiremt* rainfall, which could potentially reduce yields. Regardless, food access from own production is expected to improve the nutritional status in this area. Due to the improved food availability, these areas in SNNPR are likely to improve to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) during October 2017 to January 2018. However, the impact of the expected below-average production of both *Belg* and *Meher* 2017 seasons, due to the late-planted *Belg* crops and effects of FAW, and below-average annual labor income savings is likely to lead an earlier than normal lean season in 2018.

Lowlands of Eastern Oromia (East and West Hararghe zones)

Current Situation

Seasonal progress. February to May *Belg* rainfall began approximately two to three weeks late, and the February rainfall was erratic, below average, and had poor temporal and spatial distributions. Through April, cumulative rainfall was well below average and was interrupted by three to four weeks of prolonged dry spells. During critical crop development, rainfall ranged between only 25 to 50 percent of normal. However, the amount and distribution of rainfall improved beginning in May 2017. There was no break in rainfall in these areas as the *Kiremt* season began earlier than normal, either in the first or second dekad of June, which kicked off land preparation for short-maturing *Meher* crops.

Agricultural activities. Delayed and erratic rainfall followed by dry spells through April discouraged farmers from pursuing normal agricultural activities, including timely planting. In addition, *Belg* season planting was also negatively impacted by below-average draft power since livestock were weakened due to poor availability of pasture over the past successive seasons. Nevertheless, increased rainfall since early May 2017 enhanced land preparation and planting of *Belg* and long-cycle *Meher* crops. So far, planting performances are below normal. According to early May estimates by the Oromia Regional Government, in East Hararghe Zone, the total area planted was only 55 percent of the anticipated coverage. In particular, in Meyu Woreda in Eastern Hararghe Zone, early May woreda planting was only 15 to 20 percent of the total planned areas. Major crops planted in the area, including sorghum and maize, are currently at early vegetative stages.

Pasture, browse, and livestock conditions. Prior to the *Belg* rains in April and May 2017, there was severe deterioration of livestock body conditions due to poor pasture and water availability, notably in February and March 2017. As a result, over 3,400 livestock reportedly died, primarily cattle, from January to March in these areas. Since late April, following the enhanced rainfall, pasture and water availability have started to improve. A few livestock that had migrated to the river valleys have returned to their original localities, following the initial regeneration of pasture, browse, and replenishment of water sources. Livestock body conditions have started to improve, but improvements for cattle are still below normal due to the impacts of the past successive poor rainy seasons. The number of female livestock conceiving and giving birth remain below average, and coupled with the livestock deaths that have occurred, herd sizes and milk production remain atypically low.

Markets and prices. Since harvests from two previous seasons in a row were below normal, staple food supplies from local production in most markets has been insignificant. Current food supplies in these areas are predominantly from surplus producing parts of the country, particularly western and central Oromia. Market prices are atypically higher for major staple foods, particularly, maize. This is mainly due to supply shortages and increased demand in these areas, as well as high demand from other parts of country, especially drought-affected southern and southeastern pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. For example, in April, maize prices in Meyu in East Hararghe Zone and in Hawi Gudina in West Hararghe Zone were 25 and 20 percent higher, respectively from April 2016. Compared to last year, livestock prices have improved, although prices remain stable compared to the long-term averages. For instance, in Meyu Woreda, goat prices in April were higher by 15 to 20 percent from April 2016.

Health and nutrition. No major health problems are reported in this area. Since April 2017, the nutrition situation has been showing improvements, especially compared to last year, but the current level of malnutrition generally remains higher compared to the five-year average in terms of admissions to nutrition feeding programs. The slight improvement in access to livestock products and the number of interventions aimed at lowering malnutrition, including corn soy blend (CSB) distributions with general emergency food rations, a super cereal supply for moderately malnourished by WFP, and Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) and Stabilization Centers (SC) programs implemented by the Ministry of Health have led to improvements. Low household food access due to reduced household purchasing power, poor hygiene and sanitation practices, and underprivileged child caring practices are major contributing factors for the prevailing malnutrition situation of children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating woman. According to ENCU, TFP admissions show a steady increase, with 2,184 new admissions in April in East Hararghe, and 1,052 new admissions in March in West Hararghe, compared to 1,760 and 848 in January 2017 (up by 24.1 percent) in East and West Hararghe, respectively.

Conflict. Border conflict that occurred between Somali and Oromia regions in February and March 2017 now seems resolved following a series of conflict resolution efforts by regional and federal officials as well as key community leaders. This has allowed farmers to freely move with their livestock, and they can undertake normal agricultural activities, although this is not happening on a big scale. According to Government of Ethiopia estimates, over 73,000 and 25,000 people in East and West Hararghe zones, respectively, who were direct victims of the conflict, are in need of emergency food and non-food assistance.

Humanitarian assistance. As per the HRD launched in January 2017, the total number of people identified for humanitarian assistance were 282,033 and 322,904 for West and East Hararghe zones, respectively. However, following the revision in April 2017, these figures are changed and increased to 494,596 in West Hararghe Zone and 566,918 in East Hararghe Zone. Approximately 50 percent of these beneficiaries are in the lowland areas of the two zones given the severity of food insecurity in the aftermath of successive drought seasons since 2015. By mid-June, three rounds of emergency food assistance, composing of a food basket of 12.5 kg of wheat grain, 0.45 L of oil, and 1.5 kg of pulses (YSP) was dispatched and the distribution was completed. The fourth round allocation has been made, but the dispatch had not yet been completed by the middle of June.

PSNP. In the lowland areas, over 188,000 people in East Hararghe, and 266,000 in West Hararghe have received three months of cash transfers out of the planned six months since January 2017. In many woredas, the fourth round transfer is planned to be made in-kind (cereals and oil) and currently commodities are prepositioned and waiting for distributions to be made.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions described above, the following area-level assumptions are used to develop the most-likely scenario for June 2017 through January 2018.

Crop production

- ***Belg* production** in this zone represents no more than 20 percent of total annual crop production, and planting during the 2017 *Belg* season was below normal due to the erratic and below-average rainfall. As a result, this is expected to lead a below-normal *Belg* harvest in June/July 2017. However, the *Belg* rainfall was still sufficient to help support the vegetative growth of chat, which is a cash crop for East and West Hararghe that is expected to be harvested, beginning in November 2017.

Pasture/Water/Livestock

- **Pasture and water resources** in eastern Oromia, in particular in the lowlands, remain atypically below-average due to successive poor seasons, including the 2017 *Belg*. Near-normal *Kiremt* rainfall is not anticipated to bring about a significant improvement in **livestock body conditions and livestock productivity**, apart from deterring further deterioration of livestock conditions.
- The *Kiremt* rainfall is expected to improve **livestock conception** for shoats, beginning in early August. Shoats conceived during this period are then expected to be born at the very end of the scenario period.

Agricultural opportunities

- An anticipated near-normal chat crop (annual and cash crop) production and *Kiremt* agricultural practices are likely to trigger near-normal **agricultural labor employment opportunities** and wages throughout the scenario period in eastern Oromia.

Markets and Trade

- **Staple food prices** have steadily increased since January 2017 and are expected to continue rising, following seasonal trends, through October 2017 as supplies fall amidst heightened market demand. With the *Meher* harvest, prices are expected to slightly decline from November 2017 to January 2018, with increased food availability.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In June, poor household food access is mainly from emergency food aid, PSNP transfers, and to a smaller extent from market purchases. However, increased staple food prices that are expected to persist through the end of October ahead of the *Meher* harvest, coupled with lower incomes, significantly constrain household food access. Despite increases in livestock prices, poor household income remains low due to below-average income from agricultural labor opportunities and lower herd sizes and atypically low milk production. Poor households are expected to continue experiencing food and income shortages through September 2017 as they gradually begin to recover their depleted livelihoods from the 2015/16 El Niño-related drought. As a result, poor households are projected to continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes through September as they will not be able to cover their food consumption gaps. Although the prevalence of acute malnutrition has improved as admissions to the Therapeutic Feeding Programmes (TFPs) dropped by about 10 to 15 percent in April 2017 compared to April 2016 due to targeted interventions, acute malnutrition is likely to seasonally worsen from June to September/October 2017 due to decreased food availability before the Meher harvest. In response, poor households are expected to intensify sales of livestock, grass, charcoal, and firewood; search for agricultural labor opportunities outside of their normal areas, cut essential expenditures further, increase their collection of wild foods, and send family members to live with relatives. However, with the expected near-average *Meher* 2017 harvest, improved incomes from agricultural labor opportunities, and a seasonal decline in staple food prices, household food access is expected to increase significantly and consequently the nutritional status. Therefore, households in these lowland areas are expected to be able to meet their minimum food needs, while forgoing their livelihood expenses and will move to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) during October 2017 to January 2018.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 1. Possible events in the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
• Major river areas of Ethiopia	• Above-average *Kiremt* rainfall	• If there is above-average *Kiremt* rainfall, flooding would likely occur in flood-prone areas, mainly along the major rivers, such as the Shebelle in Somali Region, Awash in Afar, Omo in SNNPR, Baro in Gambela; and rivers along Lake Tana in Amhara Region. In addition, water logging in the highland areas could cause both crop and livelihood damage.
• SNNPR, western Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, Gambela, Benshangul Gumuz	• Severe FAW infestations during the *Meher* season	• If there are significant crop losses in SNNPR (Gamo Gofa, Wolayita, parts of Segen, Gurage), Oromia (Jimma, Wolega, Ilubababur, and parts of Shewa), Amhara (West Gojam, West Gondar), Tigray (West Tigray), Gambela, and Benshangul Gumuz regions during the *Meher* harvest in October to December from FAW, this means that the lean period in 2018 will likely start earlier than usual.
• Somali Region	• Fully pledged and funded humanitarian assistance through January 2018	• If humanitarian assistance is delivered immediately and fully addresses the required food needs in Somali Region, the area of greatest concern, through at least January 2018, this would significantly improve food security outcomes.
• National	• Increase in border tensions between Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea	• Increased border tensions would affect the amount of imported food and non-food items to Ethiopia through the Djibouti port that would lead to increased costs of imported items (both humanitarian assistance and other imported food). This could also lead to a delay in humanitarian assistance coming through the Djibouti port.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.