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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (GIEWS)

SPECIAL ALERT

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REGION: East Africa

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Alarming food insecurity in several areas of East Africa
due to severe drought

Highlights

- Widespread drought severely affects crops and rangelands in East Africa and food insecurity is expected to significantly deteriorate by early 2017
- Major areas of concern are central and southern Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, northern and eastern United Republic of Tanzania and southeastern Uganda
- Sharply increasing prices of cereals and livestock products constrain food access for large numbers of households
- Recurrent climatic shocks have undermined household resilience and urgent support to agriculture is needed

The October-to-December rainy season has failed in several areas of East Africa, heavily damaging crops to be harvested in early 2017 and pasture. Persisting severe drought conditions caused sharp reductions in plantings, wilting of crops, shortages of pasture and water for livestock as well as localized deaths of animals. The most affected areas, which received less than one-quarter of their normal seasonal rainfall, are central and southern Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, northern and eastern United Republic of Tanzania and southeastern Uganda. Despite some improvements due to late rainfall, damages to crops appear to be irreversible and rangeland conditions remain generally poor.

Production prospects for the current crops are highly unfavourable and households are expected to enter the next lean season much earlier than usual. Food insecurity for pastoralists is worsening due to declining livestock body conditions and availability of livestock products, and it is expected to further deteriorate during the January-to-March dry season, as regeneration of grazing resources has been minimal. In several affected areas, the impact of the El Niño-induced drought in 2015 and below-average March-to-May rains in 2016 have eroded the resilience capacity of a large number of households, and timely and effective support to the agricultural sector is urgently required.

Somalia

- Unfavourable prospects for the 2016/17 secondary “deyr” crops
- Poor rangeland conditions affecting pastoral livelihood systems

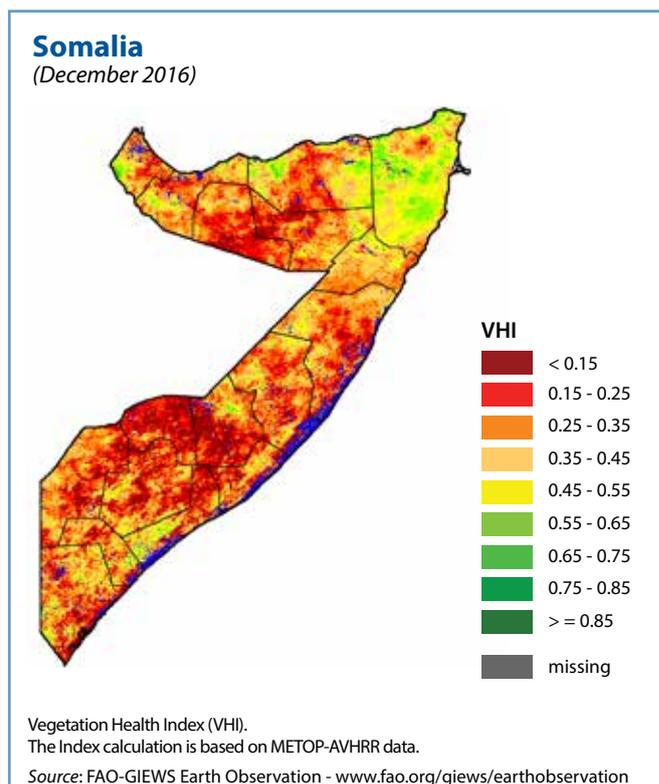
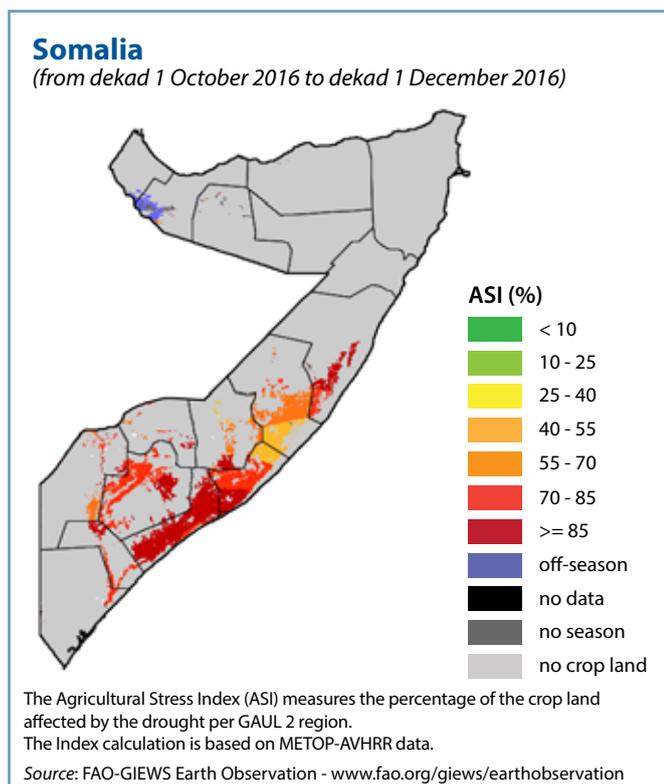
The October-to-December rainy season has been characterized by extremely poor rainfall amounts and by an erratic distribution. In Bay and Lower Shabelle regions, the two major cereal-producing “deyr” areas, no significant rains were received until the second dekad of November and the cumulative rainfall between October and mid-December was 70-80 percent lower than the long-term average. As a result of the severe drought, planted area is well below average, vegetation conditions are extremely poor and several crops have wilted due to the lack of precipitation. According to FAO’s Agricultural Stress Index (ASI), drought conditions are currently affecting more than 85 percent of the crop land in Lower Shabelle, the main maize-producing region, and in northern parts of the “sorghum belt” in Bay region. With rainfall normally subsiding in December, the recovery of “deyr” crops to be harvested by January 2017 is very unlikely and overall production prospects are highly unfavourable.

This situation, combined with seasonal increasing trends, caused prices of locally-produced maize and

sorghum to surge in November. For instance, in Baidoa market, located in Bay region, prices of sorghum increased by almost 50 percent and in Qorioley market, in Lower Shabelle region, prices of maize rose by about 30 percent. In the capital, Mogadishu, similarly, prices of sorghum and maize increased by about 20 percent. In November, overall prices of coarse grains in central and southern Somalia were up to 50 percent higher than 12 months earlier.

In pastoral areas, where pasture and water availability failed to be restored by inadequate April-to-June “gu” rains, the poor “deyr” rainy season had a further negative impact on rangeland resources and current pasture conditions are significantly below average.

Recent rains in November supported some pasture regeneration. However, these limited improvements are expected to be short-lived as the “jilaal” December-to-March dry season is about to start. As a result of the persisting pasture and water shortages, livestock body conditions are poor, with low milk productivity and birth rates, and atypical livestock deaths are reported. In Middle Juba, Lower Juba and Middle Shabelle regions, prices of goats in November were on average 30 percent lower than 12 months earlier due to deteriorated body conditions, while in Bay and Gedo regions prices of milk were about 30 percent above their year-earlier levels as a result of reduced supplies.



Ethiopia

- Severe drought in southern and southeastern pastoral areas

In southern and southeastern pastoral areas, the October-to-December “deyr/hageya” rainy season has been very poor. In southeastern Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region (SNNPR) and southern Oromia region, the cumulative rainfall from October to mid-December was up to 50 percent below average with the most significant deficits recorded in the Segen zone of SNNPR and Borena zone of Oromia region.

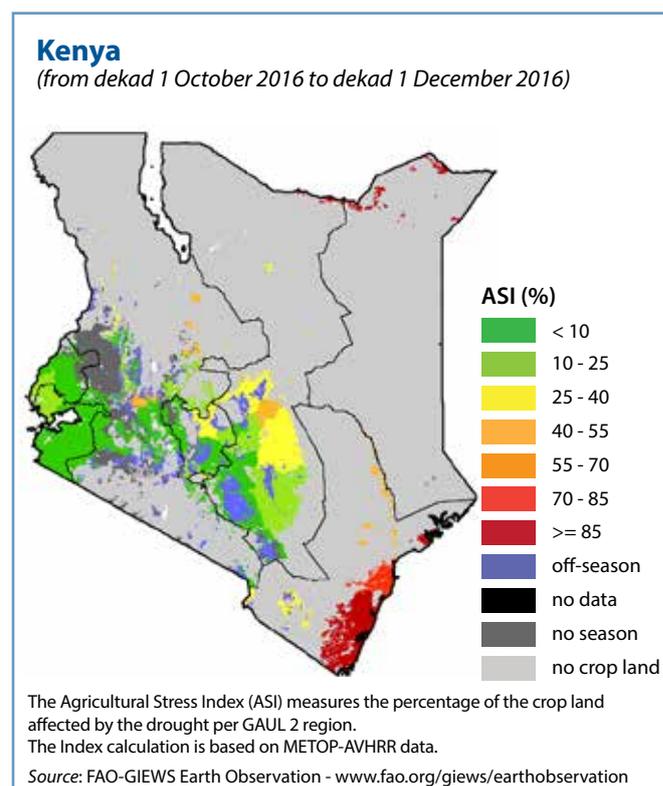
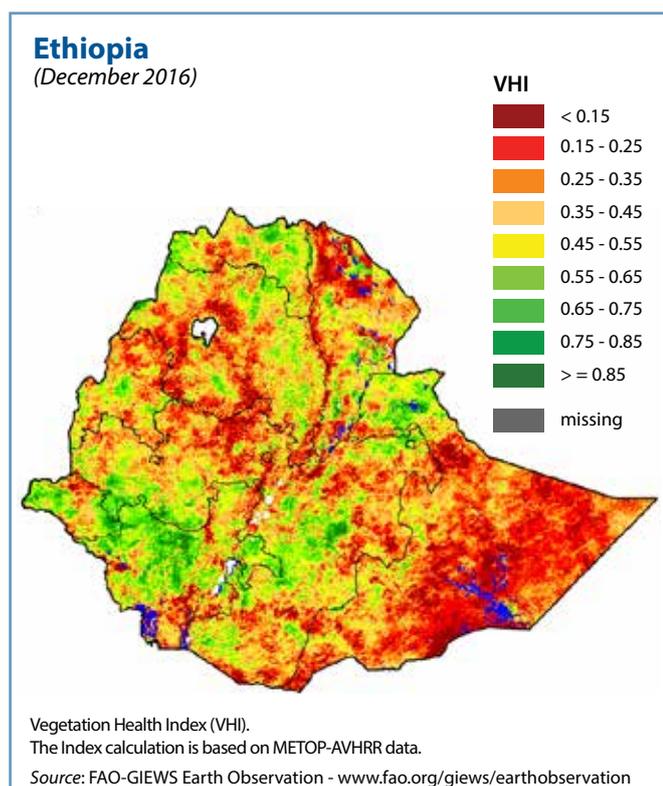
In most of southern the Somali Region, the rainy season has completely failed, with Liben, Afder, Korahe and Gode zones receiving almost no rains in October and November. Due to the severe drought, vegetation levels are significantly below average in the affected areas and rangeland conditions are extremely poor. As a result of severe water and pasture shortages, livestock body conditions are rapidly deteriorating and a typical livestock migration and deaths have been reported (in and out of the region), particularly in Afder and Korahe zones. Declining livestock prices due to poor animal body conditions, combined with higher-than-normal staple food prices, are constraining purchasing

power and food access for pastoralist households in drought-affected areas. For instance, in Gode market, the goats-to-maize terms of trade in October 2016 were about 44 percent lower than the average of the previous five years. Although some rains in early December provided limited improvements in pasture and water availability, mainly in Borena zone, the overall vegetation and water situation continues to be much below normal. With the onset of the next rainy season expected in March, a recovery in pasture conditions is only anticipated in the second quarter of 2017.

Kenya

- Drought affects yields in southeastern and coastal areas
- Poor pasture conditions in most pastoral and agro-pastoral areas

In southeastern cropping areas (Kitui, Makueni, Tharaka Nithi, North Meru and Embu counties), the rainy season started at the beginning of November with about a 2-dekad delay. In most cropping areas, cumulative rainfall from October to mid-December was 30-55 percent down from the long-term average



and mainly concentrated during the second dekad of November. In coastal areas (Kwale, Kilifi, Lamu and Taita Taveta counties), the performance of the rainy season was even poorer as no rains were received until the second dekad of November and seasonal rainfall was 70-90 percent below average. In these areas, a large percentage of farming households were not able to plant cereals and prolonged dry weather conditions caused the wilting of germinating crops. Overall, production prospects for "short-rains" crops, to be harvested by February 2017, are unfavourable, thus potentially resulting in a second consecutive reduced output after the below-average "long-rains" season harvest gathered in August/September.

The performance of the "short-rains" was poor also in most pastoral and agro-pastoral areas, affecting pasture, browsing and water availability. In northeastern and eastern pastoral areas (Samburu, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Isiolo, Garissa and Tana River counties), rains started in the second dekad of November with about a one-month delay. In these areas, the cumulative rainfall was 45-75 percent lower than the long-term average, with the most significant rainfall deficits being recorded in northern Marsabit and in northeastern Wajir and Mandera counties. Earlier in the year, the March-to-May "long-rains" were late and erratic, especially in eastern Garissa and Tana River counties, limiting pasture regeneration before the start of the August-to-October

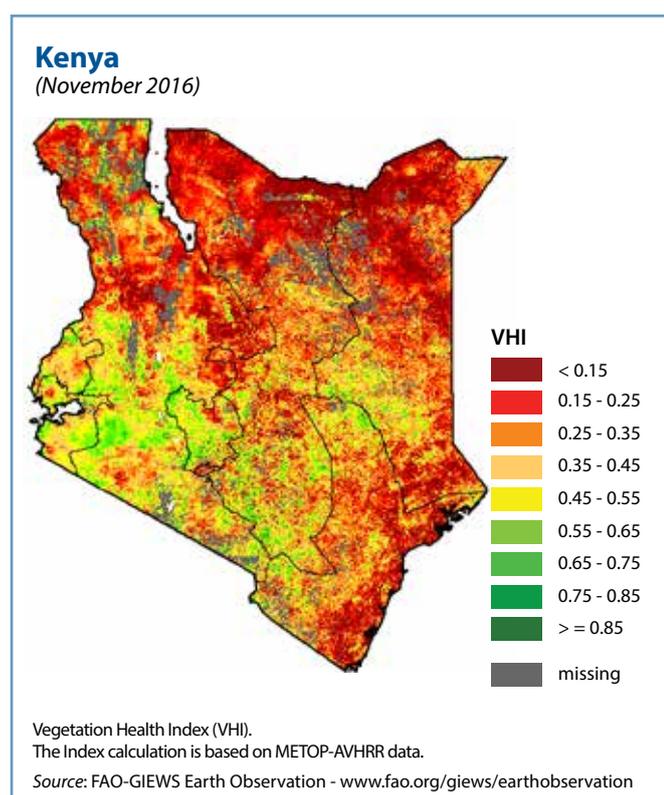
dry season. The poor performance of the current rainy season has subsequently caused a further deterioration of pasture conditions and a sharp decrease in water availability. For instance, in Marsabit and Wajir counties, 95 and 80 percent of the water points, respectively, are now dry. As a result, livestock are experiencing significant water and pasture stress and animal body conditions are generally poor, with drought-related deaths being reported in six counties. Milk production dropped to very low levels and it is currently up to 70-80 percent below average in Mandera and Tana River counties.

The rainfall received in November had some marginal positive impact on rangeland conditions. However, these are unlikely to be translated into solid increases in livestock productivity and income as most households kept their livestock away from the normal wet season grazing areas, thus reducing milk and livestock products availability at household level. The pastoralist households are facing increasing staple food prices, coupled with declining livestock prices, with a negative impact on purchasing power and food access. For instance, in November, the goats-to-maize terms of trade declined in Garissa County by almost 30 percent from the previous month.

The United Republic of Tanzania

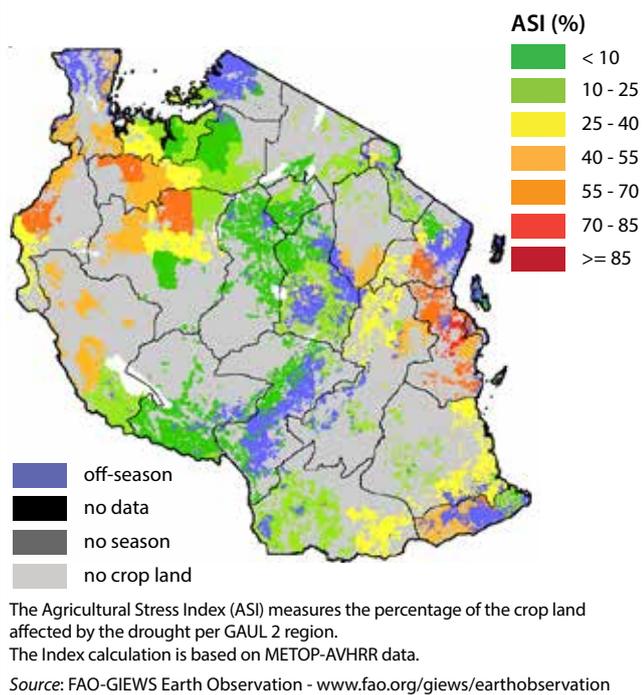
- Unfavourable production prospects for "vuli" season harvest
- Early season dryness affects planting of "msimu" crops

In northern and eastern bi-modal rainfall areas, most of the 2016 "vuli" season crops for harvest in January were affected by poor and erratic rainfall with negative impacts on crop establishment and development. In northern areas, cumulative rainfall from October to mid-December was 30-50 percent down from the long-term average in the areas bordering Lake Victoria in the regions of Kagera and Mwanza. Similar rainfall deficits were observed in the northern regions of Arusha and Shinyanga, a high potential maize-producing area. Rainfall deficits were more substantial in eastern and coastal areas, as cumulative rainfall in Tanga and Kilimanjaro regions was 60 and 80 percent below average, despite improved rainfall in December. In Pwani Region, where significant rains were received only in the first dekad of December, the ASI indicates that more than 85 percent of the crop



United Republic of Tanzania

(from dekad 1 October 2016 to dekad 1 December 2016)



land is affected by drought in some areas. Overall, vegetation conditions are poor and production prospects are unfavourable, increasing the likelihood of a second consecutive reduced harvest after the below-average “masika” season harvest gathered in August.

In central and southern uni-modal rainfall areas, planting of the 2017 “msimu” season crops, to be harvested from May, normally takes place in November and December. However, planting operations have yet to commence in Katavi, Tabora, Singida and Dodoma regions, where rains started in the first dekad of December with about a one-month delay. Early season dryness is also reported in major cereal-producing areas of southern highlands in Rukwa, Mbeya, Iringa, Njombe and Ruvuma regions. As rains typically establish in December in these areas, rainfall performance in the coming weeks is crucial for crop establishment and development, and a close monitoring is warranted.

In October and November, maize prices surged by 35 percent in Arusha market, located in the northeast. Here, seasonal patterns were compounded by tight supplies after a reduced “masika” season output harvested earlier in the year and by unfavourable prospects for the current “vuli” crops. In November, prices of maize in Arusha were 26 percent higher than 12 months earlier.

Uganda

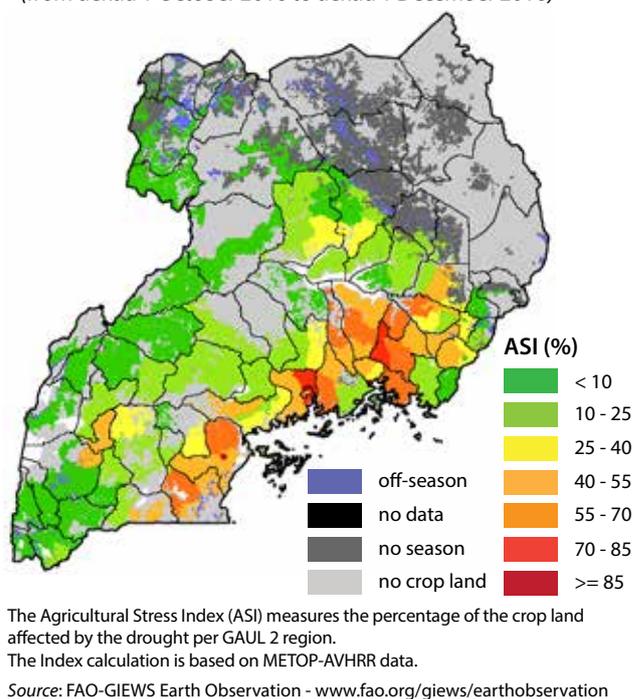
- Unfavourable production prospects for second season crops in some districts around Lake Victoria

Harvesting of the 2016 second season crops is underway in bi-modal rainfall areas. In some southeastern districts around the Lake Victoria basin, precipitations have been characterized by poor amounts, up to 40 percent below the long-term average, and by an erratic distribution. Here, the poor weather conditions had a negative impact on crop establishment and development and production prospects are unfavourable. According to the ASI, the areas of major concern, where 55-85 percent of the crop land is affected by the drought, are western Rakai, Kalungu, Bukomansimbi, eastern Wakiso, eastern Kampala, western Mukono, northern and central Kayunga, northern Kamuli, Kaliro, Luuka, Iganga, Mayuge and Pallisa districts.

Prices of maize, already increasing since August, surged in November as seasonal patterns were compounded by concerns over the performance of the second season harvest and by sustained export demand by neighbouring countries. Prices of maize increased in November by about 20 percent in the capital, Kampala, and in Lira market, located in a northern key-producing area, while they rose by 12 percent in Busia market, an important cross border trade hub with Kenya. As a result of the recent sharp increases, November maize prices were at record levels in all monitored markets.

Uganda

(from dekad 1 October 2016 to dekad 1 December 2016)



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