Overall Food Security Situation
The recent monitoring exercise is the second round of food security monitoring data collected by WFP in Djibouti over a period of three months (January–March). These results have been compared with the very limited sample of December 2010 and results of the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in May 2010. Comparing the results of these rounds of household data suggests that the food security in parts of Djibouti has deteriorated. Responses from monitored households have shown declining food consumption patterns in Obock and Tadjourah with improvements in other districts. Household reliance on purchase as a source of food has increased in several districts although market prices are also increasing and thus rural households continue to be constrained. In addition, food assistance was reduced around the country due to resource constraints. The decline in food security could also be attributed to below normal heys/dada rains, poor distribution of the current Dirac/Sougoum rains and increasing prices of staple foods that are exceeding the purchasing power of rural households. This second round of covered all five districts (Ali Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil, Tadjourah and Obock) of Djibouti.

Household Food Consumption (FCS)
The Food Consumption Score not only allows comparisons of dietary frequency and diversity among populations but it is also used to establish a threshold of dietary quality against which to compare these populations. Households are classified as having either ‘poor’, ‘borderline’, or ‘acceptable’ consumption based on the analysis of the data. Overall, consumption has improved between December 2010 and March 2011 with percentage households reporting good consumption increasing from 34% to 43% respectively. However, it’s still lower than May 2010 at 47%. At district level, the percentage of households with poor and borderline consumption varies across districts. The graph shows the percentage households with poor, borderline and acceptable consumption for the periods May 2010, December 2010 and March 2011. Consumption has improved in Dikhil and Ali Sabieh but declined in Obock, Tadjourah and Arta with an increase in percentage households reporting poor and borderline consumption.

Sources of Food
Looking at sources of food, households mainly rely on purchase and food assistance as their major sources of food. However, reliance on own production has increased by 7% between May 2010 and March 2011 while purchase has reduced from 77% to 54% in the same period. As shown in the graph, in Ali Sabieh and Dikhil, household reliance on the market has reduced and their reliance on food assistance has increased while the reverse is true for Arta, Obock and Tadjourah. Worth noting is the increased reliance on own production in Dikhil and Tadjourah. Overall household reliance on assistance has reduced from 50% in December to 30% in March, however this is attributed to reduction in food assistance provided by WFP due to resource constraints.
Markets and Prices
Rice, wheat flour, sugar and oil are some of the most important food commodities to households in Djibouti hence important in understanding food security conditions. The chart to the right shows monthly retail price trends selected food items consumed by households in Djibouti for the period January to March 2011. Though prices are stable in some districts and months, they have for the most part increased especially in Ali Sabieh and Arta. According to FEWSNET March Outlook, prices of staple foods continue to exceed purchasing power of rural households and are expected to increase further. Therefore, although household reliance on purchase has gone up in some districts, they are constrained by the increasing prices

Household Expenditure
In general, households reported spending about 84% of their expenditure on food with 16% on non food items. This is a higher than what was reported in May 2010 with 77% and 23% on food and non food items respectively but similar to December 2010. There are small variations across district but the highest percentage of food expenditure was reported in Dikhil. However, overall monthly per-capita expenditure has decreased between the May 2010 and March 2011 is similar at 2,300 Djiboutian Francs per month. The highest per-capita expenditure was reported in Arta at 4,009 Djiboutian Francs per month. This could be attributed to increasing food prices as shown above in the price graph. In addition, the FEWSNET March outlook, also reports that prices of staple food have continued to increase.

Food Assistance
Overall over 72% of the households reported that they were beneficiaries of WFP food assistance and had received food in the last 30 days prior to this monitoring activity. Over 50% reported that the food is collected by men which is a reduction from 70% reported in December 2010. Across districts, over 80% reported that food is collected by women except in Tadjourah and Obock. Over 80% reported that the decision on how food assistance is used is made by both men and women. Most households reported that the cereals provided usually last a period of 19 days. And finally over 90% of households reported that they were satisfied with the food provided.

Coping Strategies
The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) measures the frequency and severity of actions taken by households in response perceived food shortage. A higher CSI score means more stress and potentially declining food security. The number of different strategies employed by households is another measure of the degree of coping households are implementing to adjust to the affects of food insecurity. Between May 2010 and March 2011, although the household coping index has decreased in three out of five districts, households are still employing several food based coping mechanisms. The decrease is mainly seen in reduction number of meals eaten in a day which reduced from 6 days a week in December 2010 to three days a week as well as relying on less preferred foods that has reduced from five days a week to 3 days a week. On the other hand, borrowing of food has increased from twice a week to three days a week. As seen in the graph, Obock and Tadjourah showed the highest stress levels with high coping index at 31 and 28 respectively compared to the others which are all below 15 for the period March 2011. These stress levels are also reflected in the increased percentage households with poor and borderline consumption for the two districts.