Rwanda
Food Security update

Highlights

- The post-harvest period has already set in (Figure 1) with seasonal performance expected to range between below average and average.

- Staple prices stabilized in May compared to the previous month, but were higher than their respective last year and five-year averages, especially for starchy commodities.

- Late onset and early departure of rains in the eastern parts (Figure 4) has resulted in localized poor seasonal performance, leaving about 40 thousand households with no or lower-than-usual food stocks.
Season 2016 B production expected to be relatively below average: Agriculture production of key staple commodities (cereals, legumes, pulses, roots and tubers) in Season 2016 B has been adversely influenced by erratic rainfall, mainly in the eastern zones. In localized areas, stock durations are expected to be shorter than normal, which will constrain middle and poor households’ ability to provide for themselves in terms of essential food and non-food items. This will most likely last till the end of the next agricultural season in December-January, in absence of necessary assistance.

Key staples were generally more expensive than usual: According to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), main staple prices in May 2016 were generally higher than normal. Prices were also higher compared to last year, but stable compared to last month in both rural and urban markets. Comparisons of the current prices with last year and five-year averages indicate that the top three most expensive commodities were the starchy types, especially Irish potato, cassava flour and sweet potato in both urban and rural markets (Figure 2).

Moreover, the food and non-alcoholic consumer price index gradually increased from January up to April. The consumer price index stabilized in general from April to May, except for in urban settings where the trend was still upward (Figure 3). Prices are expected to seasonably decline following harvests in June.

In the event markets are not supplied with cheaper imports, staple prices will most likely increase earlier than normal, due to higher demand from dry-spell affected locations.
Figure 2: May 2016 prices and anomalies

Source: Calculations based on NISR price data
Figure 3: Evolution of food and non-alcoholic beverages consumer price index

Source: Based on NISR CPI data

Seasonal rainfall delayed and discontinued earlier than normal in the East: Countrywide, rainfall ranged between normal and below normal during the March-May period. The eastern part, in particular, experienced a late rain onset, with a 25-50 mm deficit in March, when planting normally takes place. The same extent of atypically dry conditions was observed in May, which implies crop failure as irrigation is not yet widely practiced.

Moreover, the east experienced pockets of rainfall deficit in the period of October-November-December 2015, which resulted in localized poor Season 2016 A harvests.

Related to that, information from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) indicates that 45,919 families across Nyagatare, Kirehe and Kayonza Districts need assistance due to dry spells in Season A and B 2016. Water supply to humans and livestock, pasture conditions are adversely affected.

Nonetheless, above-average rainfall during the first 10 days of May has caused damage as per the table below:
Table 1: Summary of May 7-8 heavy rainfall related damages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Destroyed</th>
<th>Damaged crops</th>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>Roads and bridges damaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gakenke</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,754</td>
<td>1,875</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3 Large Bridges, 7 Small Bridges, 5 Roads temporarily blocked by landslides, 4 main water sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhanga</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7 Small Bridges, 9 water sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngororero</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6 Small Bridges, 3 Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2,317</td>
<td>3,447</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3 Large Bridges, 20 Small Bridges, 8 Roads, 4 Main water Sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MIDIMAR, unpublished

In brief, 822 families whose houses were destroyed by landslides and floods needed non-food items including blankets, buckets, soap, sheets, mattresses, clothes, women pads, kitchen sets, hygienic kits, and water treatment chemicals. 791 families needed food assistance until recovery. Provision of food for 6,000 households during an additional five months requires 1126.45 tons of beans and maize (60% maize and 40% beans), 90,000 liters of cooking oil and 30 tons of salt.

For vulnerable groups (pregnant women, children under five and elderly people) appropriate food will be required (porridge, sorghum flour, nutritive biscuits and maize flour). As suggested by MIDIMAR, the response package requires a total of 771,489 USD.
Figure 4: Rainfall anomalies. This depicts the deviation of current rainfall from the long-term mean. In other words, current rainfall minus the long-term average might result in positive (above average) or negative (below average) figures.

Source: Early Warning Explorer/USGS