Rwanda
Food Security update

Highlights

- There is an increased likelihood of below normal rainfall in Rwanda over October to December period; which might exert more pressure in drought prone areas in Rwanda, already undergoing reduced food stocks as a result of two consecutive below normal harvests.

- Maize, beans and water for human consumption are unconditionally distributed to households in drought affected areas in the Eastern province.

- Staple food prices stabilized in July compared to the previous month, but were well above their respective previous-year and five-year averages, especially for roots and tubers.
The upcoming agricultural season might experience below normal rainfall: Rainfall in October to December period will likely be lower than average, with probabilities of above normal, near normal and below average levels respectively being 25, 35 and 40 percent.¹ Though the forecast is not customized to specific areas of the country, drought prone areas are most likely to face atypically reduced moisture levels, exposing households whose primary livelihood activity is agriculture production to more vulnerability, considering already two successive poor seasons.

**Government is assisting around 45,000 households adversely affected by drought in the East:** Lower than average household stock levels have led to food assistance to the most in need, located in the Eastern province where drought has been most predominant.

However, basic food and non-food needs are most likely not being met due to households’ limited resources caused by reduced agricultural output. Regarding water distribution, each household is benefiting from 40 liters per day, regardless of the size;² which implies challenges in hygienic conditions for bigger household sizes among the poor until moisture conditions are restored after upcoming rains’ onset.

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² MIDIMAR, unpublished
Key staples were generally more expensive than usual: According to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), main staple prices in July 2016 were generally higher than five-year-average. 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 in both urban and rural markets were the starchy staples, especially Irish potato, cassava flour and sweet potato (Figure 3).

Moreover, the food and non-alcoholic consumer price index gradually increased from May till July (Figure 2).

In the event markets are not supplied with cheaper imports, staple prices will most likely increase earlier than normal, due to atypically low supply from dry-spell affected locations which normally produce marketable surplus.

Figure 2: Evolution of food and non-alcoholic beverages consumer price index

Source: Based on NISR CPI data

Livestock conditions deteriorated earlier than usual in the East: Reduced moisture and water availability in general has not only adversely affected seasonal performance, but also livestock. Countrywide, rainfall ranged between normal and below normal during the March-May period. The eastern region, 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.
Figure 4: Greater Horn of Africa Consensus rainfall Outlook for the October to December 2016 rainfall season

Zone I: Increased likelihood of above normal rainfall

Zone II: Usually dry

Zone III: Increased likelihood of above normal rainfall

Zone IV: Increased likelihood of below normal rainfall

Zone V: Increased likelihood of below normal rainfall