Summary

Over 1.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern and northern Uganda face moderate to high food insecurity and risk of malnutrition. The coping mechanisms of many IDPs have eroded.

Unseasonable rainfall currently being experienced in the Lake Victoria Basin is of no consequence to area crop production. Normal conditions in other districts augur well for crop maturity and harvests.

High crop prices this year limit household market access, especially in areas of civil insecurity, where crop production has been low and household food stocks are minimal.

FEWS NET is conducting a conflict study in the Karamojong Cluster of Kenya and Uganda to test use of livelihood-related information and data management systems in existing peace processes.

1.0 Civil and Food Insecurity continue in Eastern and Northern Uganda; Normal household food security in other regions

Civil insecurity, due to violence by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), remains the principal impediment to food access and food security in Gulu, Kitgum, Lira, Pader (Northern Uganda) and Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Soroti and parts of Kumi Districts (Eastern Uganda). More than 1.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) live in several camps in the districts, with Gulu District being the most severely affected (See Table 1).

Table 1: Estimate Number of IDPs by District; Percent of District Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/District</th>
<th>Est. no. of IDPs</th>
<th>Population (2002)</th>
<th>IDPs Percent of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaberamaido</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>122,924</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katakwi</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>307,032</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumi</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soroti</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>371,986</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>436,240</td>
<td>468,407</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitgum</td>
<td>237,270</td>
<td>286,122</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lira</td>
<td>68,800</td>
<td>757,763</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pader</td>
<td>229,115</td>
<td>293,679</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite variation in their concentration, the IDPs in all affected districts face practically the same harsh living conditions: moderate to high food insecurity and dependence on the World Food Programme for a major proportion of their food needs. Limited access to food has increased IDPs’ risk of malnutrition, mainly affecting children below five years, and conditions are not likely to improve in the short term due to limited options for improved food access and food variety. In all of these districts, IDPs have limited access to land for cultivating crops and lack proper shelter to sleep and adequate water and sanitation facilities. These conditions expose them to high risk of disease and infections, such as malaria and upper thoracic infections. The IDPs are...
also constrained in their income earning due to the lack of opportunities within the camps and their vicinity. Only a few IDPs venture into urban areas to seek income opportunities to supplement other sources of food and meet other household needs. As a result, the coping mechanisms for a large majority of the IDPs have severely eroded, and their concentration in large numbers in specific camps is also stressing environmental resources as the IDPs try to meet their basic daily requirements for fuel and other needs.

As government efforts to ensure civil security continue, short term remedies to improve IDPs' conditions hinge on enhanced collaboration between government and humanitarian organizations to better manage delivery of food and basic services, increase monitoring of food and health conditions and provide psycho-social support to victims of rebel activities.

### 2.0 Food Security Conditions and Prospects

Outside the districts affected by civil insecurity, increasing supplies of crops from the second season's harvest support normal household food access and food security. Crop supplies have also increased inflows to markets as well as enabled households to replenish food stocks. FEWS NET does not foresee any major constraints to household food access.

Normal dry conditions prevailed in Karamoja region during November with occasional rains received in the wetter western belt where households are harvesting crops; crop harvests are nearly over in the predominantly pastoral areas close to the border with Kenya. The harvest has improved household grain and other food stocks, which are expected to last between two months in the pastoral areas and six months in wetter agriculture areas, where there are higher levels of crop cultivation. The harvest has also improved market supplies, leading to reduction in crop prices and improved market access, except in inaccessible locations cut off by bad roads and where supplies are low. Livestock/grain terms of trade are favorable and enable households owning animals to access markets. Vegetation and water supplies continue to be good and favor normal livestock access to pastures and water, although a few areas report limited access due to increasing dry conditions that have affected availability of grass and water. WFP still provides food but is now mainly targeting development activities aimed at addressing chronic insecurity, including support to schools and supplementary and therapeutic feeding centers.

Vegetation and water conditions in Mbarara and Ntungamo Districts, two other pastoral areas, are good and maintain normal livestock access to adequate pasture and water.

### 3.0 National Trends:

### 3.1 Agro-climatic Conditions: Predominantly normal weather conditions were observed during November. Districts in western and southwestern Uganda received normal to above normal rainfall, which maintained adequate soil moisture to support maturing (annual) as well as perennial -- mainly plantation -- crops, including matooke (cooking banana) and tea. Northwestern Uganda also recorded normal rainfall. Dry conditions, observed since October, continued in central and eastern districts for most of November.

Since early December, wetter than normal conditions have been recorded in several districts of central Uganda and Lake Victoria Basin. These conditions have puzzled farming communities. The Uganda Department of Meteorology attributes this phenomenon to mild El Niño conditions occurring over the Pacific
Ocean which cause increased rainfall in the East African region. The department indicates these conditions are localized, short lived and of no consequence to crop production. However, the rain may be beneficial to livestock farmers by supporting rejuvenation of vegetation and replenishing of water sources to improve livestock access to pastures and water.

3.2 Crop Production and Conditions: Most crops are nearing maturity or have matured in the fields and are keeping farmers busy with the second season harvest in most of the country. The main farming activity now is reaping food and cash crops, including cotton, maize, sweet potatoes and a host of other crops. Figure 1 shows progression of the season with specific reference to maize. The image correlates well with observations in eastern, central western and southwestern Uganda, where a large proportion of the crop has reached maturity and is being harvested. Dry conditions in eastern Uganda favor cotton harvesting. Cotton was a major cash crop in the 1960s and is gradually regaining prominence as an income earner for farmers in the region.

The bean harvest is almost over in key growing areas and household stocks and market supplies have improved. Matooke production is reportedly normal in Bushenyi, Mbarara and Ntungamo Districts (southwestern Uganda), where it is a staple crop. These districts are major suppliers to Kampala and other Ugandan towns as well as neighboring Rwanda.

4.0 Commodity Prices, Food Availability and Access

The 2003 retail prices (Figure 2) for most crops remain comparatively higher than they
were last year, signifying lower access to markets this year. Between January and November, the average price for matooke rose 44% in Mbarara and 27% Kampala. The increase is attributed to lower production during 2003, a result of dry conditions during the crop's vegetative months (February-April) as well as high effective domestic demand and export demand to Rwanda.

Millet prices in Soroti were stable at an average UShs 389 (US$ 0.20) per kg during 2002 but rose by approximately 20% to UShs 466 (US$ 0.24) per kg in 2003. Higher crop prices in Soroti this year are attributed to extension of LRA activities and displacement of people in the Teso region, which disrupted farming activities and increased demand for food from markets. Limited harvests in June and July and humanitarian interventions helped depress prices for a short period only before they started rising again due to high demand. This price trend is expected to continue because of anticipated below normal second season harvests and low household food stocks.

The IDPs have limited income opportunities, if any. As such, high staple food prices severely limit their access to markets, thereby increasing their food insecurity.

5.0 Karamoja Conflict Study

FEWS NET is conducting an 18-month study of conflict in the Karamojong Cluster of Kenya (Turkana) and Uganda (Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit Districts) in which use of livelihood-related information and data management systems will be tested in existing peace processes. The assumption is that conflicts between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in the arid and semi-arid zones of northwest Kenya and northeast Uganda are largely driven by shrinking livelihood options and increasing or perceived scarcity of environmental resources. FEWS NET believes that providing useful information to local communities on factors that influence their livelihood systems will make people aware of long-term trends that affect their livelihoods as well as strengthen their local communities' capacity to find common resolutions to existing or potential conflicts. This is particularly true if information delivery is linked to formal conflict early warning and prevention networks.

This study intends to promote cross border early warning initiatives, establish sustainable information networks and build on the strengths of traditional institutions for early warning and conflict prevention. It will also contribute to the customization of livelihood related technological information to meet local needs and realities as well as enhance and strengthen the establishment of broad-based and inclusive conflict networks at community, district, national and regional levels.

While the primary objective of the study is to clarify the potential use of FEWS NET information and analysis in conflict prevention and mitigation, it also intends to pave the way for future debates and trends in the field of conflict early warning, prevention and mitigation. In addition, the study will enhance the capacity of local communities to better understand the linkages between livelihood changes and conflict, thereby enabling them to take preventive measures based on objective information and balanced analysis. A monthly Karamoja Conflict Peace Newsletter (KCPN) will be one of the outputs for analysis and providing information.