**KEY MESSAGES**

- The onset of the long rains (March-May) were delayed by at least 10-20 days and cumulative rainfall through April 25th was less than 55 percent of average across most of the country. This delayed agricultural production activities in marginal agricultural areas and depleting rangeland resources in pastoral areas. Recent, significant rainfall amounts in late April are expected to partially replenish forage and water resources, providing relief to pastoral areas and supporting crop production activities of drought-tolerant crops like sorghum, millet, green grams, and cowpeas.

- Persistent dry conditions in pastoral areas has driven atypical migration and declines in livestock body conditions, though recent rainfall is expected to alleviate deterioration in the short-term as water and forage resources become partially replenished. The goat-to-maize terms of trade have declined since January, but remained average to above-average in March, which has supported pastoral household food access and maintained Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes. However, below-average terms of trade and reduced household income during the July-September dry season, coupled with heightened resource-based conflict, is expected to push some areas into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in Tana River, Garissa, Mandera, Isiolo, Baringo, Samburu, Wajir, Marsabit, and Mandera in August.

- Poor households in marginal agricultural areas still have some household food stocks but face a decline in agricultural labor income due to the impact of delayed and below-average rainfall. Short-cycle and main crop harvests are expected to be at least 50 percent below average and delayed by one month. As a result, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected in many areas, and a smaller proportion of vulnerable households with limited income sources are likely to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes beginning in August.

- Staple food prices remained below the five-year average in most urban and rural reference markets in March, facilitating average to above-average household food access. This continues to be driven by carryover stocks, recent short rains production, and regional cross-border imports. Maize prices were 22-30 percent below average in urban markets and 13-35 percent below average in marginal agricultural markets. Dry bean prices ranged from near-average to 19 percent below average across all markets, but rose eight and 19 percent above average in Eldoret and Kisumu, respectively, due to dependence on high-priced imports.

**Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2019**

**Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2019**

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.
CURRENT SITUATION

National overview: Since the February short rains assessment conducted by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG), food security has declined more than previously anticipated, driven by changes in weather conditions that have resulted in below-average long rains (March-May) performance. In marginal agricultural areas, households are facing a second below-average production season. In pastoral areas, atypically dry conditions are driving rapid deterioration of forage and water resources, negatively impacting livestock productivity and prolonging atypical migration patterns to dry-season grazing areas. According to the April drought early warning bulletin issued by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), conditions in Turkana, Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa counties measured by various indicators confirms the progression of drought conditions.

Seasonal progress: After generally below-average short rains (October–December) performance, the onset of the long rains has been delayed in several areas and cumulative rainfall has been less than 55 percent of normal across most of the country (Figure 1). Although a timely onset of rain occurred in most cropping areas of western Kenya, western Taita Taveta county, and localized areas in central Kenya, rainfall is generally 10-20 days late in other parts of western Kenya, the Rift Valley region, and marginal agricultural areas. In worst-affected parts of western Kenya, the rains are more than 40 days late. In pastoral areas, the rains generally began on time, except in southern Garissa, where they were 10-20 days late, and in most parts of Turkana, Tana River, and a small part of southern Garissa, where the rains have yet to begin. In areas where the rains were timely, the rains subsided into long dry spells that continued through April, which is normally the peak of the rainfall season. Consequently, the start of cropping activities has been significantly delayed nationwide, water availability is below-average, and forage resources are significantly below average.

Marginal agricultural conditions: Water availability is below-average, with trekking distances to domestic water sources ranging from 2.6–5.6 kilometers (km) compared to 1.4–4.7 km in a normal year. These distances are generally 16-20 percent above average, but in Nyeri, distances are almost twice the average at 2.6 kilometers. Exceptions include Embu and Kilifi, where trekking distances are near average, and Kitui and Tharaka Nithi, where distances are 15-23 percent below average. In many areas, land preparation is still ongoing, compared to planting in a normal year. However, in parts of Kitui, Tharaka Nithi, and Nyeri, dry planting has taken place. In Taita Taveta, some maize, beans, and green grams have wilted or seeds have rotted due to insufficient moisture. Generally, it is expected that farmers are cultivating less acreage than normal, given poor rainfall and limited capacity to replant due to the high cost of certified seed.

Pastoral conditions: Coupled with significant rainfall deficits, persistent and exceptionally warmer-than-normal land surface temperatures have accelerated the depletion of pasture, browse, and water. Vegetation conditions measured by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) are less than 60 to 90 percent of the long-term median (Figure 2). The most important water sources, such as water pans and dams, have already dried up and households are increasingly relying on boreholes, shallow wells, and traditional river wells. Livestock trekking distances from grazing areas to watering points have increased to near-average in Turkana; 10-17 percent above average in Isiolo, Garissa and Samburu; and 57-67 percent above average in Mandera and Marsabit. Consequently, livestock body conditions have deteriorated to fair to poor conditions compared to fair to good at this time of the year. Milk production has declined to 15-30 percent below the five-year average in most counties, while Mandera and Turkana report 40-50 percent deficits. However, no abnormal livestock mortality levels or abortions have been reported and current mortality rates are within normal ranges. As pasture and water scarcity proliferates, atypical livestock migration has intensified, further limiting household milk availability. Livestock from Marsabit have migrated into northern Isiolo, northern Wajir, and southern Samburu, while those from Wajir and Garissa have migrated into eastern Isiolo, northern Kitui, and northern Tana River counties. As a result, resource-based tensions have continued and are limiting access to grazing areas in conflict hot spots.

Markets and Trade: In March, staple food prices widely remained below- to near-average in urban and marginal agricultural
key reference markets. In urban reference markets in Nairobi, Eldoret, Kisumu and Mombasa, wholesale maize prices were 22-30 percent below the five-year average due to the availability of carryover stocks from surplus 2018 long-rains harvests in high and medium production areas and regional imports from Tanzania and Uganda. Dry bean prices were near the five-year average in Nairobi and Mombasa, moderated by cross-border imports, but eight and 12 percent above average in Eldoret and Kisumu, due to below-average 2018 long rains beans production and the higher marketing costs of importing supplies to these locations. In marginal agricultural reference markets, maize prices remained 13-35 percent below the five-year average, as most households still have food stocks and markets are supplied from high and medium production areas and cross border imports. Bean prices similarly remained near-average in Nyeri and 8-19 percent below average elsewhere.

In pastoral reference markets, the goat-to-maize terms of trade (ToT) generally remained above average in March but have exhibited a declining trend since January. The exceptions include Samburu and Turkana, where the ToT have remained stable and above-average. Driven by limited supply and persistent high demand, goat prices were 14-46 percent above the five-year average, with the exception of Turkana and West Pokot where prices have declined to average. Maize price trends are more varied, at 12-23 percent below average in Samburu, Turkana, and West Pokot; near average in Isiolo and Marsabit; and 10-18 percent above average in Garissa and Mandera. The amount of maize that could be purchased from the sale of one goat ranged from 40 to 83 kilograms across all reference markets. When compared to the respective county average, the ToT ranged from 13 to 29 percent above average in most counties, but were average in Garissa and Tana River. Most notably, the ToT were nearly double in Mandera, despite rising maize prices, due to the significantly above-average goat prices.

**Interannual and humanitarian assistance:** In response to drought conditions, the Hunger Safety Net Program (HSNP) has initiated an emergency scale up of cash assistance equivalent of a half food ration to reach an estimated 43,000 additional households in Turkana and Wajir, or approximately eight and 38 percent of the total county population, respectively. Typical interannual HSNP assistance, which covers about 40 percent of total household food needs, also continues to support about 97,000 vulnerable households in Turkana, Marsabit, Wajir, and Mandera. National and county governments have also distributed emergency food assistance across food insecure counties. The government aims to reach the entire county population, but information on the number of beneficiaries reached is not yet available. Further, the Islamic Relief Kenya Red Cross Society has provided two percent of the population in Garissa and ten percent of the population in Isiolo with emergency cash transfers. Other interannual cash assistance programs have continued, reaching approximately 1,031,000 vulnerable households through Cash Transfer-Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Older Persons Cash Transfer, and Persons With Severe Disability-Cash Transfer. WFP’s Sustainable Food Security Programme, in partnership with various county governments, is also providing income to households in non-harvest months to help build their resilience.

**Pastoral outcomes:** In Turkana, the results of the KFSSG short rains assessment in Turkana projected 18 percent of the county population would be food insecure through August. Although area-level Stressed (IPC Phase 2) remains the most likely current outcome, the below-average season is driving households into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in worst-affected sub-counties as the season progresses. In early April, FEWS NET, NDMA, and the Turkana County Technical County Steering Group conducted a rapid field assessment that confirmed the number of households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is increasing. Most households are consuming one meal per day, compared to a typical one-to-two meals per day, and have a poorly diversified diet of maize, beans, oil and sugar primarily sourced from humanitarian assistance and food purchases. However, reported livelihoods coping strategies are primarily indicative of Stressed (IPC Phase 2), including purchasing food on credit and borrowing money and food. Normal levels of livestock sales, charcoal and bush products (e.g., aloe vera), and other income sources have continued. According to March NDMA sentinel site data, the proportion of children under five years of age considered “at risk” – as measured by MUAC <135mm – has increased seasonally, but was 18 percent below the five-year average. Current levels of combined interannual and humanitarian food assistance are mitigating gaps in household food consumption, though the prevalence of emergency food assistance, specifically, is limited to approximately eight percent of the population primarily located in worst-affected, ‘hotspot’ areas across Turkana’s various sub-counties.

As of April, the majority of poor households in other pastoral counties are still able to access their minimum food requirements, despite worsening trends. Prevailing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are largely being driven by persistent, above-average terms of trade and continued livestock saleability, though body conditions are declining. Migration to areas with dry pasture availability has sustained sufficient livestock saleability, allowing poor households to continue to sell a typical number of animals. This has maintained above-average purchasing power and facilitated access to food. However, limited milk availability and declines in income from other livestock-related sources, as well as ongoing resource-based conflict, are driving declines in food security. Food consumption is declining, as an increasing number of poor households are employing consumption-based coping strategies – especially the reduction of meal portions and consumption of less preferred/cheaper
Given the anticipated below-average regeneration of water and rangeland resources, livestock migration is expected to be at least 50 percent below the long-term average. Deficits are likely to be exacerbated by the persistence of low rainfall in April, the peak rainfall month. Even with a short-term increase in rainfall in May, the cropping period is now too short to support late-planted maize crops. As a result, labor demand is expected to be significantly below average from April through May. Further, agricultural casual labor wages are expected to drop significantly, based on historical trends.

According to national and county governments and multilateral donors, inter-annual and emergency food assistance is planned, funded, and likely to continue. Planned humanitarian food assistance is likely to be scaled up from April through September across the country. Relevant county governments are in the process of generating drought response plans covering all the key sectors. However, as information on the number and location of targeted beneficiaries is not yet available, this scenario assumes the absence of assistance.
the scenario period. Consequently, resource-based conflict is likely to continue as livestock increase their range of movement further from homesteads in search of forage and water. Hot spots include the southern Turkana and northern Samburu border, especially in Baragoi, and the Turkana North and South Sudan border, especially in Kibish. Migration into atypical areas such as private ranches, national parks and game reserves, is also likely, which is anticipated to increase both inter-communal and human-wildlife conflict.

MOST LIKELY PROJECTED OUTCOMES THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2019

In pastoral areas, current Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected to be sustained through June, facilitated by below-average to average staple food prices that will continue to mitigate declines in household purchasing power. However, significant declines in food security are expected to occur from July through September, with an early start to the lean season occurring in June. As resources become increasingly scarce, accelerated declines in livestock body conditions and productivity will restrict household food and income sources. Atypical livestock migration and resource-based conflict will further impact food security, specifically in the traditional conflict prone areas of Baragoi, Kapeto, Tiaty, and Kainuk along the East Turkana-South Samburu-Baringo-West Pokot border; Kibish in Turkana North sub-county; Sericho/Modogashe areas in Isiolo South sub-county; and Wayu, Chifiri, Waldena and Lacole areas in Tana Delta and Galore sub-counties in Tana River County. Sustained migration away from the homestead, coupled with poor body conditions, is expected to reduce milk production even further and household access to milk will become significantly limited, especially in areas like Turkana and Mandera counties where production is already 50 percent below average. Livestock saleability and prices will continue to decline and are expected to reach below-average levels in the July to September period, reducing household income. Although staple food prices are expected to remain below average through June, steady declines in national market supply will impact remote pastoral markets first, and food prices are expected to rise to above-average levels from July until the unimodal long rains harvest becomes available in November, which will be later than usual due to late planting. Erosion of household purchasing power will occur more quickly in Garissa, however, given that maize prices are already above average. As household food access declines, more poor households will experience food consumption gaps and will engage in or increase the frequency of consumption coping strategies and livelihoods coping as well. Conflict-prone areas with limited market access, in the absence of humanitarian assistance, are most likely to experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Turkana, Tana River, Garissa, Mandera, Wajir, Samburu, Baringo, Isiolo, and Marsabit are the areas of greatest concern.

In marginal agricultural areas, more households are expected to deteriorate to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in Makueni, Kitui, Taita Taveta, Kwale, Kilifi, Tharaka and Nyeri (Kieni) through September. Current household maize stocks are likely to be depleted by early May in the southeast and in June in coastal areas, reducing food consumption and dietary diversity. As a result of poor rainfall, below-average agricultural wage labor opportunities and below-average crop production are expected to reduce household income by 60 percent and household food sources by 30 percent. Short-cycle crops, planted in April, will be minimally available in June, while main harvests will be delayed until August. It is expected that these will be devoid of maize and primarily consist drought-tolerant sorghum, millet, green grams, cowpeas, or pigeon peas. Harvests are unlikely to be sufficient for both consumption and sales, and will likely be consumed within a month at the household level. In response, households are expected to expand alternative income sources, such as charcoal sales, remittances, and petty trade, and increase the use and frequency of stressed consumption and livelihoods coping strategies, such as buying food on credit, borrowing food, and spending savings. Interannual assistance will also continue to be available. Partially recharged forage and water resources will stabilize livestock body conditions, which is anticipated to facilitate milk production and sustain livestock value, so that households continue to benefit from above-average livestock-to-cereal terms of trade. In marginal agricultural markets, staple food prices are most likely to remain below-average throughout the scenario period, due to better market integration and trade flows as well as proximity to cross-border entry points. As a result, food access is generally expected to remain favorable, allowing most households to meet their minimum food needs and remain resilient despite the shock of a poor season. However, a limited number of poorer households in Kitui, Taita Taveta, and Makueni that have limited capacity to cope with the disruption of their livelihoods, as well as some households whose fields have been destroyed by human-wildlife conflict or farmer-pastoralist incidents, are expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE
This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).