



DROUGHT THREATENS LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS IN KENYA,

Early action needed to avert a food crisis – January 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

- La Nina effect is currently interfering with agricultural and livestock production in North Eastern, parts of Eastern, Coast and the North Rift of Kenya. The most affected areas are Turkana, Baringo, Moyale, Marsabit, Isiolo, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Kwale. This is having an impact on the livelihood and food security of over 3 million people dependent on rearing livestock in the region. About five deaths have been reported from drought related causes.
- Communities are calling for water trucking for animal and domestic use, and other livelihood support to be scaled up to avert the worst impact of the drought in the coming months.
- The short rains assessments planned by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) to happen from 17 – 28 of January will give a clearer picture on impacts on the ground and an exact figure of populations at risk. In the meantime, humanitarian actors are calling for the scaling up of livelihood support intervention; water trucking, provision of water boreholes and destocking to mitigate the La Nina-drought impacts.
- Severe impacts of the drought have been mitigated to an extent so far because of some of the long term interventions that were put in place following the 2008 and 2009 drought when the government bought livestock to reduce losses, raised the strategic grain reserve and expanded and revamped irrigation agriculture and research

The information contained in this report has been gathered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) from sources including the Government of Kenya, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, media and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

SITUATION OVERVIEW

1. Depressed and poorly distributed October – December 2010 short rains as a result of La Nina has led to prolonged dry spells across the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of Kenya. Populations dependent on crop and livestock production are most at risk. La Nina effect is currently interfering with agricultural and livestock production in most parts of the country. The most affected areas are Turkana, Baringo, Moyale, Marsabit, Isiolo, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Kwale.
2. Increasing migration distance in search water and diminishing pasture is impacting on livestock body conditions-which is currently reducing the market value of animals and the income pastoralists' earn to purchase basic foods. The reduced income realized from the sale of animals means families are not earning enough to buy adequate and balanced meals for their families- a situation that impacts on child health and results in malnutrition.
3. Communities are calling for urgent early response interventions to mitigate the current La Nina-drought impacts across the Arid and Semi-Aridlands. Over 3 million Kenyans are presently at risk from the drought effects in

PRIORITY NEEDS

District authorities and sectors have reported the following areas of priority and needs:-

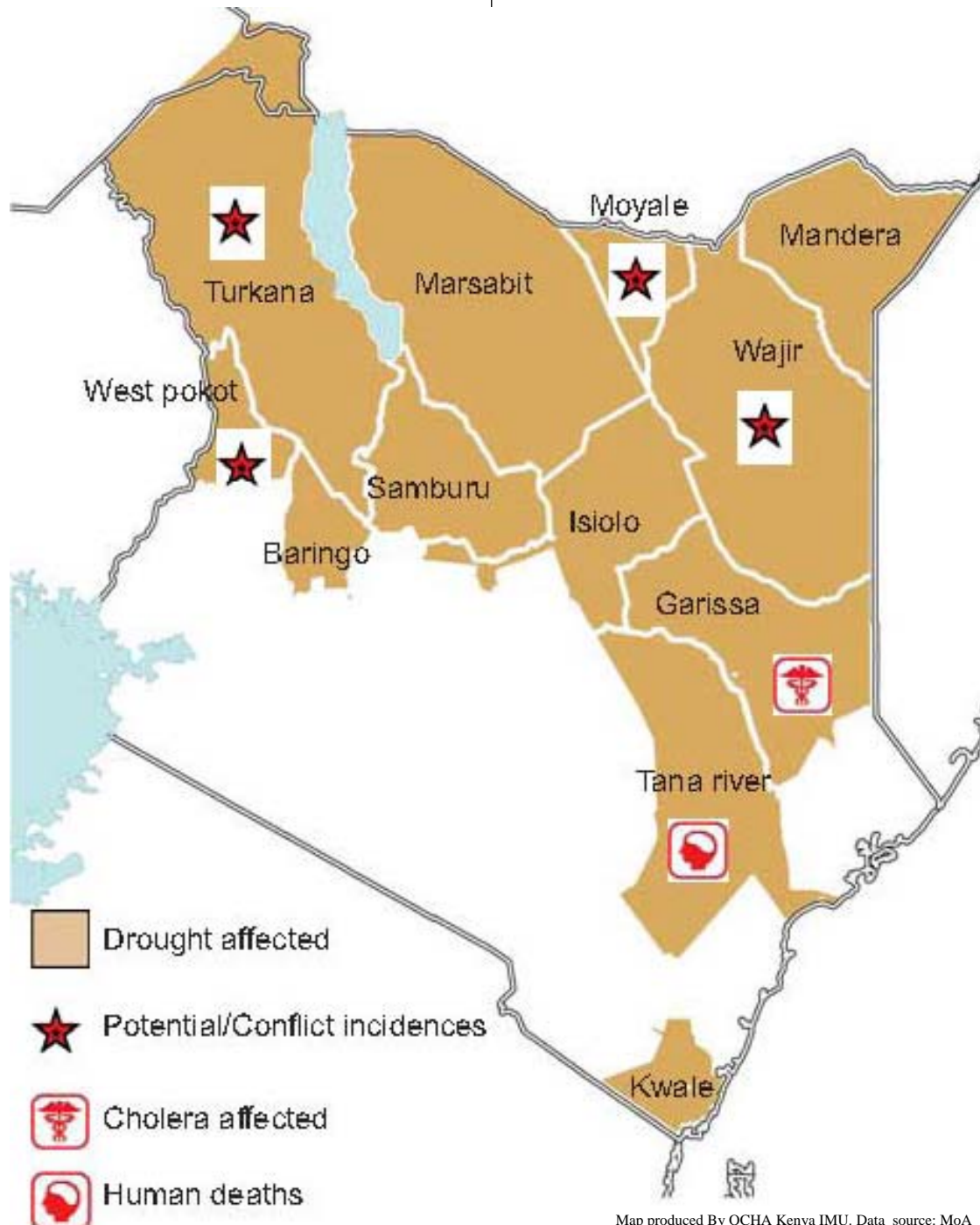
- **Food security and nutrition situation:** The food security situation in the Moyale, Turkana, Garissa, Samburu, Mandera and Marsabit Wajir, West Pokot, Baringo is on alert level with the risk of deterioration. Food ration is being distributed to about 55,600 families in Isiolo Country. 15,038 of this number is benefiting from the food for asset programme.
- **Water shortage:** Most water pans in the ASALs have dried up stretching the few boreholes available. According to the Kenya Red Cross, locals in Moyale are using unsafe drinking water from shallow wells. The water is supplied by vendors at Sh60 per 20 litre jerry can. Most residents cannot afford this. Water trucking for human consumption has commenced in most parts of the ASALs. Boreholes are overstretched in most parts of the region.
- **Malnutrition:** The nutrition rate has generally remained positive in spite of drought conditions

North Eastern, parts of Eastern, Coast and the North Rift of Kenya. The Kenya Red Cross has warned that the situation could get worse unless early response interventions are put in place.

4. The dry spell is leading to increases in food prices which are further compromising the food security for vulnerable populations. Maize and Green gram prices have gone up about 50 per cent. The price increases are being attributed to depleted household stocks of crops. Livestock prices have Plum

taking effects in the ASALs. In Wajir the nutrition status of children below five years was reported stable in November 2010, with the percentage of those rated at risk of malnutrition being 24.2%. In West Pokot, there is a decline in milk consumption evident by the changes in the MUAC < 135mm levels which rose from 7.7% in October 2010 to 11.2% in November 2010.

- **Livestock Movements:** As pastures, browse and water sources dwindle, livestock out-migrations to dry grazing areas have been



meted drastically to less than 50 per cent in value further compromising the purchasing power and food security of pastoralists in the ASALs. The Government of Kenya is allocating 150,000 metric tons of maize for North Eastern Kenya and 70,000 metric tons for Turkana. Nutrition status has been resilient to impact of drought, but this gain could be lost unless livelihood support and supplementary feeding is intensified.

5. If the current La Niña follows the classical patterns, the poor rainfall performance that commenced in October – December short rains will also affect the March-May 2011 rains. The drought is likely to decimate much of the 50 million livestock in arid areas, valued more than USD 2.5 million by the Kenya livestock marketing council, unless urgent sustainable measures are put in place by the government. In the 2005/2006 drought, livestock worth more than Sh70 billion was lost in North Eastern Kenya alone to drought. In 2008/2009 Kenyans watched in horror as thousands of dying livestock were belatedly trucked to Kenya Meat Commission (KMC). The current situation calls for urgent early response strategy to mitigate the worst impacts of the drought.
6. The impact of the drought has been mitigated so far because of some of the long term interventions that were put in place following the 2008 and 2009 drought when the government bought livestock to reduce losses, raised the strategic grain reserve and expanded and revamped irrigation agriculture and research.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

UN agencies, partners and the government have been implementing response interventions in the following areas:

- Water trucking – going in Moyale, Mandera, and Turkana
- Food aid - all the districts
- Supplementary feeding - all the districts
- Peace building – Turkana, Samburu,
- Livestock vaccination
- Food for Assets – Turkana, Garissa
- Livestock disease surveillance
- Repair, servicing and procurement of livestock boreholes equipment – Garissa

COORDINATION

OCHA on behalf of the Resident Representative and the Humanitarian Coordinator remain in regular contact with the Government of Kenya, donors, district/local authorities, NGO and communities in the affected areas. OCHA will continue to issue regular Situation Reports as information becomes available.

- reported in Moyale, Turkana, and Marsabit. The situation appears to be stable in Garissa and Samburu. Water point is reported to have dried in Moyale, Turkana and Mandera where water trucking has already been initiated.
- **Livestock body conditions:** The livestock body conditions are deteriorating as pastures dwindle owing to poor rains performance. Common livestock diseases included Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCP), anaplasmosis and enterotoxaemia has been noted in Samburu.
- **Milk productivity:** Reduced milk availability is already being reported in Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera, Moyale. Improvements body conditions and milk availability have been recorded for Garissa and Samburu.
- **Conflict incidences:** Resource induced conflicts have reduced in most of the districts but cross border conflicts have increased in Turkana. This is however likely to intensify in other districts with deterioration in pasture and water resources. In Wajir, few cases of conflict over water and pastures were reported in Wajir/Moyale boundaries and along the Kenya /Somalia border. Tensions and potential for conflict over resources and historical hostilities remain high in Pokot North District especially in Alale's Sasak, Nauyapong and Ompolion.
- **Human diseases:** Human disease incidences – reported include malaria, trachoma, chicken pox, pneumonia and upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) – in Garissa. There is also concern for cholera to re-emerge due to water scarcities and resulting hygiene & sanitation practices that get compromised.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- Destocking
- Support for peace building initiatives
- Food for Asset (FFA) programmes - Samburu
- Water trucking – Mandera, Moyale, Turkana
- Repair of borehole generator sets, provision of fast moving spare parts & fuel subsidy for all boreholes
- Increase supplementary feeding to continue and increase coverage
- More elaborate sector response plans to be developed

For more information, please contact:

Jeanine Cooper: Head of Office – UNOCHA Kenya Tel: +254-20-7625155, Email: cooper1@un.org
Choice Okoro: Head of Communications, Mob: +254-732 500020 | Email: okoroc@un.org