

# SKBN Coordination Unit

## Humanitarian Update

September 2020



COVID-19: A man washes his hands at Yabus Balla Market- Blue Nile (Photo: August 2020)

### FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

#### *Household food stocks remain low across the Two Areas*

##### Blue Nile

Poor harvest of maize and short-duration sorghum has been reported across Blue Nile. Despite food security improvement in August and September as a result of the Jibraka (near farm) harvest, the yield was below normal compared to the same time last year. The low yield was a result of the uneven rain distribution experienced in most parts of Blue Nile (Bieh, Soda, Chali-el-fil and Beni-mayu in Chali and Balila, Jebel Magar and Gos Razen in Wadaka payams), and lack of seeds exacerbated by pests and diseases. The uneven rain distribution also affected long-duration sorghum resulting in stunted growth.

In Komo Ganza, food security returned to normal after two rounds of food aid. In September, WFP conducted an emergency food distribution to a total of **1,218** households, since this community was the most affected in terms of food insecurity due to a poor previous harvest. Markets remained the main source of food in Wadaka and Yabus payams, beside food aid. These communities engage more in mining and trade than in agriculture. Consequently, food stocks from their own production are insufficient during the lean season. Jebel Magar and Goz Razen village in Wadaka payam were the most affected by hunger in the last two months. Plans for a third round of food distribution is underway for October.

### Highlights

Rains disrupt response in the Two Areas, while food prices remain high

WFP distributes food to 1,218 households in Komo Ganza, Blue Nile

WFP scales up feeding for 90 schools in South Kordofan

In contrast, food security improved among communities in Chali payam, with a better Jibraka harvest, which resulted in over 50 per cent of households reporting in September to have food stocks left.

Markets in Blue Nile were partially functional despite the reopening of cross-border markets after months of lockdown due to COVID-19 restrictions. Food prices remained high in the monitored markets of Balila and Mayak markets in Wadaka payam, with some staple commodities like sorghum unavailable in the markets. On the contrary, food prices remained stable in Chali Payam. This is because this community engaged in agriculture, hence depended on their Jibraka harvest, although it was below normal.

Livestock scarcity was witnessed since June. Cattle prices increased in Wadaka payam as a result of Fellata nomads' movement northwards causing scarcity of both meat and milk.

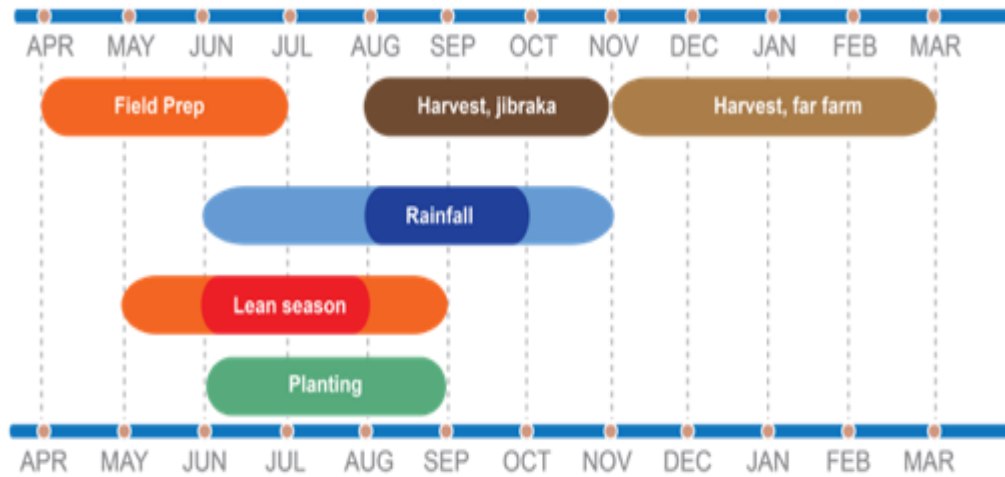
### **South Kordofan**

Food security remains a concern despite the Jibraka harvest of maize, groundnuts, tomatoes, eggplants, pumpkin, cucumber and short-duration sorghum, in South Kordofan. The state experienced low agricultural activities on both traditional and mechanized farms as a result of lack of seeds (delayed seed distribution due to heavy rains and impassible roads and seeds were consumed due to low household food stock levels), tools and insecurity (specifically in Thobo) have led to low farm yields. Heavy rains made the ploughing of most mechanized farms difficult, and affected farms in lowlands due to floods, which washed away crops, particularly in Heiban and Thobo counties. As a result, crop production is expected to be below standard next year.

Price of sorghum remains high and the cereal is unavailable in most of the monitored markets in Delami, Um Durain and parts of Thobo. This is due to a high demand compared to a limited supply caused by COVID-19 restrictions on crossline points of entry and impassible roads in the rainy season exacerbated by a high number of returnees (**21,989** as of August). However, with regards to high market prices, committees have been formed and dispatched to different counties to study the situation and report back to authorities for decision making.

### **Western Jebel**

Estimated 98% of households are food insecure and depend entirely on the market. As a result, the sale of livestock and labor increased to raise money to buy food. Increase in prices of livestock and basic commodities was witnessed due to COVID-19 restrictions that impacted food supply, while the demand for food increased due to depleted household food stocks.



*Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

## COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

### *Awareness still ongoing in the Two Areas*

Awareness raising, and preparedness activities are still ongoing in the Two Areas, in addition, plans to train teachers and students in preparation to reopen schools in October. Rains have hampered the COVID-19 response due to impassable roads.

#### **NEEDS:**

**The following needs and gaps were identified in response to COVID-19 pandemic in the Two Areas:**

- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a large wider coverage;
- Furniture and equipment in planned isolation centers throughout the region;
- Soap, hand washing facilities and increased water supply in crowded settings;
- Strengthening of screening and quarantine facilities at points of entry, especially in Blue Nile;
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves;
- Improving food availability and temporary shelters for new arrivals quarantined at points of entry;
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness and transportation of humanitarian supplies;
- Improving and scaling up of isolation centers especially in Western Jebel and Blue Nile.

#### **GAPS:**

- Delay of medical supplies across the Two Areas due to COVID-19 restriction measures and poor road network due to the rainy season;
- Low levels of stock of medicines and medical supplies in the SPLM-N controlled areas;
- Funding in health and WASH sector at points of entry.

## EDUCATION

### *Schools set to reopen after months of closure*

#### **Blue Nile**

The Secretary of Education confirmed that new registration of candidates will start soon as per the new academic calendar (. Education in Blue Nile remains underfunded. There are **47** primary schools, as per 2020 report, but secondary and tertiary education is non-existent.

#### **South Kordofan**

According to the Secretariat of Education (SoE), schools are scheduled to reopen on October 10, 2020 with COVID-19 guidelines in place. **2044** students enrolled in Primary 8 (**1203** males and **841** females) and **402** enrolled in Senior Four (**232** males and **170** females). However, the SoE is in need of: learning materials, teacher incentives, school feeding, facial masks, soap, washing stations and water especially in remote schools in Heiban, Delami, Umdorein, Thobo, Western Kadugli, Kau, Nyaro Warni, New Tageli and Abassiya.

WFP has scaled up a school feeding program for a total of **90** schools in Heiban, Delami, Um Durain, Thobo and W. Kadugli with a total number of **40,000** students. And it will continue to support Primary 8 as well as Secondary 4 candidates and Orphanage schools with school feeding.

#### **Western Jebel**

Senior 4 and Primary 8 candidates are in preparation for South Sudan National Examination. However, support is needed in terms of learning materials, school feeding, teacher incentives and construction of classrooms. Communities struggle to build and manage community schools.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

### *Lack of essential medicine to meet demand*

#### **Blue Nile**

As previously reported, Primary Health Care Units (PHCUs) are lacking essential drugs such as Paracetamol, Ibuprofen and Anti-malarial required to meet demand. Drug supply by partners was conducted but was not enough to cover all the clinics in the area. A sample report from the three monitored PHCUs in Gondolo, Yabus Kubri and Yabus Agaba registered a total of **1839** malaria cases, **827** Lower Respiratory Tract Infection (LRTI), **766** allergy, **291** Peptic Ulcers and **156** UTI cases in

September. Reproductive, maternal and child health remains a neglected area of humanitarian delivery and the infant mortality rate continues to be worrying.

### **South Kordofan**

Based on reports from the field and Secretariat of Health, malaria, coughing, eye infection among children, diarrhea and respiratory infection remain the commonly reported diseases throughout the region. Most of the health facilities reported lack of enough drugs to meet the demand due to COVID-19 lockdown and impassible roads that delayed response. As a result, patients (often children, pregnant women and the elderly) walk long distances to seek treatment. WFP continues its support to feed mothers admitted with children in Mother of Mercy Hospital.

### **Western Jebels**

Common diseases like malaria, skin infection and pneumonia were reported. The health sector is underfunded and lacks trained staff. Shortage of; drugs persists due to impassible roads.

## **WASH**

### ***Increased risk of waterborne diseases in the rainy season***

#### **Blue Nile**

Access to clean water remains a challenge. According to the report from the Secretary of Engineering (SoEng), there are a total of **142** boreholes in the area, ten of which are broken. Local communities resorted to unsafe water from ponds. The most affected areas: Abdira, Samari, Chali el fil and Yabus Kubri, among others.

However, **28** people were trained on water management, **56** pump mechanics were trained on handpump maintenance, **25** boreholes were rehabilitated (9 in Yabus payam, 9 in Wadaka and 7 in Chali), and **200** school adolescent girls in Anyille, Tsunda, Puda'om, Benamo and a Qontayo were reached with hygiene kits.

#### **Western Jebel**

**25** people were trained on handpumps maintenance in Dilling County.

## **ANIMAL HEALTH**

### ***Limited access to veterinary medicine***

#### **Blue Nile**

Although there are no confirmed figures of livestock deaths, the general health of livestock remained poor in the region, which has hindered livestock keeping. Worms, cough and diarrhoea were among the common diseases reported. Poor animal health resulted into poor quality of meat and milk.

## **South Kordofan**

It has been reported that livestock mortality has increased mainly due to lack of veterinary services specifically in Um Durain, Heiban and Delami. Despite the recent reopening of crossline markets, veterinary drug supply from government-controlled areas is still limited, resulting into high prices households cannot afford.

## **PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY**

### ***Displacements in South Kordofan and Western Jebel continued***

#### **Blue Nile**

Movements from Ethiopia were witnessed towards the end of September due to the opening of Ethiopian-Blue Nile border. But these were returnees coming mainly to visit their families.

#### **South Kordofan**

IDPs, returnees and host communities affected by heavy rains in the region and flooding in parts of West. Kadguli, Heiban, and Thobo are in urgent need of food and NFIs. Also, a high influx of returnees is expected during the dry season. Actors should prepare for response in terms of food, medical, education, NFIs and temporary shelters.

There's peaceful co-existence between the two tribes of Shat and Angolo after violent clashes in August that led to loss of lives and destruction. This was made possible by the peace building groups that were established to bring the two tribes together.

In September, a local leadership meeting was convened, and the objective was to address issues of looting, stealing and high prices of food commodities for the action of the local authorities.

*The SKBN CU reports security incidents according to the information received from a variety of sources. This information does not include a comprehensive verification of perpetrators or damages.*

*This monthly update on humanitarian issues in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states is compiled by the SKBN Coordination Unit. With three main functions of information, coordination and advocacy, the SKBNCU strives to put out regular and accurate information on the humanitarian situation of people affected by the conflict since 2011.*

*Please send your comments to [advocacy@skbncu.org](mailto:advocacy@skbncu.org)*