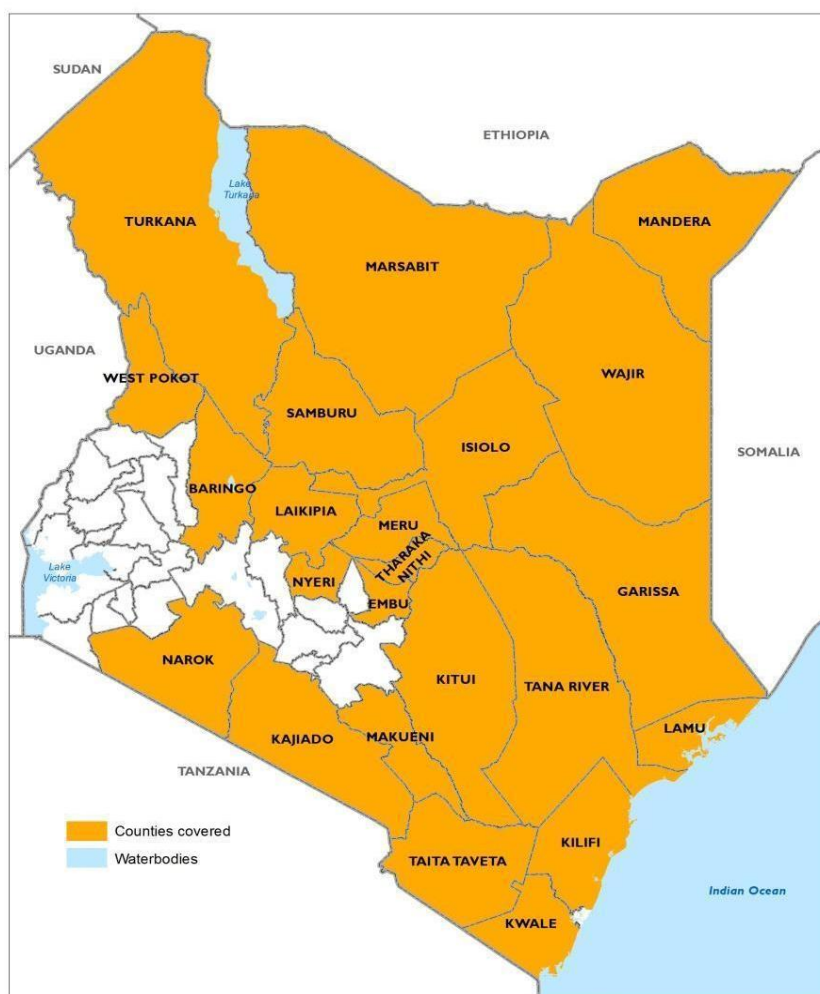




Ministry of East African Community (EAC), the ASALs & Regional Development

ASSESSMENT REPORT: IMPACT OF 2025 SHORT RAINS ON FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY



Collaborative report of the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG): Ministries of East African Community (EAC), ASALs and Regional Development; Agriculture and Livestock Development; Water and Sanitation; Health; Education; Labour and Social Protection and interior and National Administration (Department of refugee services); the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD), UNDP, WHH (Welthungerhilfe), Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), World Food Programme (UN WFP), Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), and Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) County Steering Groups (CSGs): with financial support from the Government of Kenya (NDMA) and partners.

February 2026

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1.0 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of the 2025 Short Rains Assessment

The Kenya Food and Nutrition Security Assessment (FNSA) is a multi-sectoral, multi-agency exercise spearheaded by the Government of Kenya, conducted in 23 Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) counties and the refugee camps of Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei. The Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) coordinates the assessment in collaboration with the County Steering Groups (CSGs). KFSSG brings together representatives from government ministries, United Nations agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the food and nutrition security sector.

The multi-agency assessment team is chaired by the National Drought Management Authority, with the World Food Programme serving as co-chair. Due to the bimodal rainfall pattern experienced in the ASAL counties, food and nutrition security assessments are conducted twice a year, after the long rains (March to May) and the short rains (October to December). The 2025 Short Rains Assessment was conducted from 19 January to 13 February 2026.

1.2 Objective

The assessment sought to establish the impact of the 2025 short rains on food and nutrition security across 23 ASAL counties, as well as the food security situation in the refugee camps. It examined the combined effects of the season and other shocks influencing food security, including their implications for food availability, access, utilization, and stability. The report analyzes both the underlying drivers and the resulting outcomes, assessing their effects on critical livelihood sectors such as livestock, water, agriculture, health and nutrition, education, peace and security, and markets and trade. It also outlines recommended interventions based on the findings and presents the overall results of the assessment.

1.3 Methodology and Coverage

The assessment primarily examined acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition, while also accounting for underlying chronic drivers. It addressed the four dimensions of food security; availability, access, utilization, and stability. In addition, the analysis considered how other contributing factors affected key sectors, including agriculture, livestock, water, health and nutrition, education, peace and security, and markets and trade. The assessment further proposed both immediate and long-term interventions to respond to the challenges identified in each sector.

The assessment covered the 23 counties that make up Kenya's ASAL region, where populations are typically among the most food-insecure due to elevated poverty levels, heightened exposure to shocks and hazards, the effects of arid conditions and highly variable rainfall. It also included the three refugee settings of Dadaab, Kakuma, and

Kalobeyei. The ASAL region, accounting for about 80 percent of Kenya's total land area, is divided into five distinct livelihood clusters:

- i. Pastoral North-East: Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Tana River and Wajir.
- ii. Coastal Marginal Agriculture: Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu and Taita Taveta.
- iii. Pastoral North-West: Marsabit, Samburu, and Turkana.
- iv. South-East Marginal Agriculture: Embu, Kitui, Makueni, Meru and Tharaka Nithi.
- v. Agro-pastoral: Baringo, Kajiado, Laikipia, Narok, the northern part of Nyeri county (Kieni sub-county) and West Pokot.

The main livelihood systems within these clusters include Pastoralism, Agro-pastoralism, Mixed Farming, Marginal Mixed Farming, and limited Irrigated Cropping, which collectively served as the units of analysis.

The assessment drew on both primary and secondary data sources. The key sources included:

- i. NDMA's drought early warning and monitoring system.
- ii. Data collected from the relevant sectors at county and sub-county level.
- iii. Secondary data from Kenya Health Information System (KHIS).
- iv. FEWNET and Kenya Meteorological Department Agro-climatic data.
- v. WFP's food security outcome monitoring.
- vi. Field observations during transect drives.
- vii. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) poverty and population figures.
- viii. Community and market interviews, utilizing focus group discussions with community members and structured interviews with traders.

The analysis applied the **Acute Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC Version 3.1)** to assess severity and root causes. Additionally, **IPC Acute Malnutrition analysis** helped determine both food and non-food factors contributing to malnutrition. The IPC is a standard global tool for classifying the severity of food insecurity and ensures that best practices are adhered to.

2.0 | DRIVERS OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY/INSECURITY

2.1 Rainfall Performance

The October-November-December 2025 short rains were generally below average and erratic, marked by wide regional differences in timing, rainfall totals, distribution, and cessation. The onset varied considerably across livelihood zones. Western Kenya, parts of the Pastoral Northwest, as well as sections of the Agro-pastoral and Southeast Marginal Agriculture zones experienced normal to early onset, ranging from on time to as much as four dekads earlier than usual.

Conversely, the Pastoral Northeast and Coastal Marginal Agriculture (CMA) zones recorded average to late onset, with delays of one to four dekads. Within the Agro-pastoral cluster, areas such as Nyeri (Kieni) and Laikipia experienced timely or early onset, while West Pokot recorded a false start. In several other areas—including the coastal belt, southern Rift Valley, and parts of the southeastern lowlands—the season began with a false onset followed by extended dry spells or failed to establish altogether, as observed in Mandera, Wajir, and Kilifi counties.

Rainfall totals were predominantly near-average to below-average, with the largest deficits occurring in the northeast, coastal areas, and southeastern lowlands. Kitui was the only station that recorded above-average rainfall (133.6% of its long-term mean), largely due to a single heavy rainfall event of 126.1mm. The Pastoral Northeast experienced critically low totals, with Wajir and Mandera receiving less than 25% of their usual rainfall, while the Pastoral Northwest had mixed results—parts of Turkana received above-average rains, but Marsabit was below average; similarly, the Agropastoral and South Eastern Marginal Agriculture zones recorded varied totals, and the Coastal zone remained below 75% of its long-term average, with Kilifi and Lamu among the lowest nationally.

The temporal and spatial distribution of rainfall was exceptionally poor across all clusters. The season was dominated by prolonged dry spells and isolated intense storms, severely undermining agricultural and pastoral activities. November—typically the peak month—was especially dry nationwide, ranking among the driest on record for many stations, including those in Marsabit,

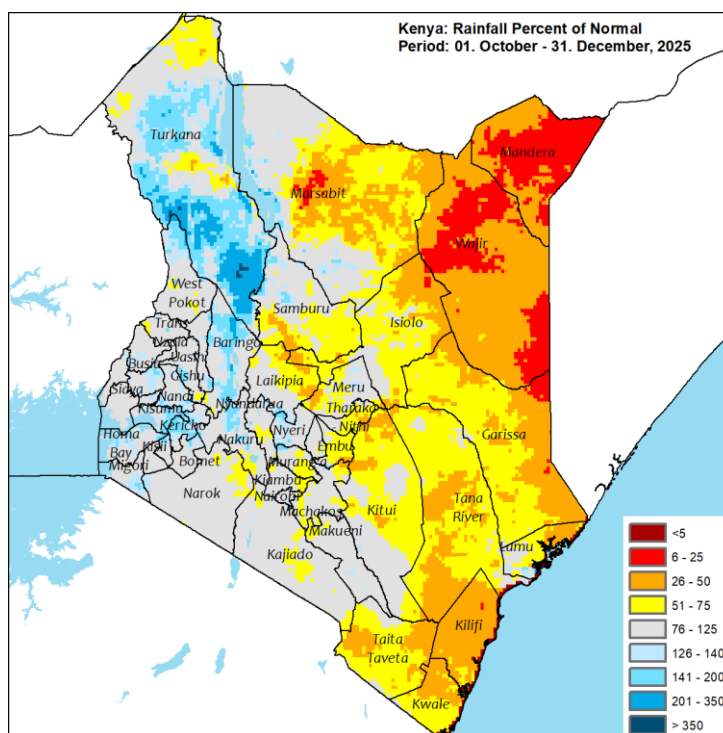


Figure 1: Rainfall Performance (% of Normal)

Mandera, Kisumu, and Nairobi. Even in regions like Kieni and parts of Turkana that recorded near- or above-normal seasonal totals, rainfall was concentrated over only a few days, leaving areas dry for most of the season. Poor distribution was a consistent theme: in Kajiado, a dry October hampered crop germination; in West Pokot and Samburu, a prolonged November dry spell disrupted the growing season; and in coastal counties like Kwale and Kilifi, erratic rains led to widespread crop failure despite localized near-normal totals.

Cessation occurred earlier than normal across much of the country, particularly in the northeast, coast, and southeastern lowlands. In the Pastoral Northeast, rains ended as early as the first to third dekad of December in Mandera, Wajir, and Isiolo. Coastal counties like Kwale experienced cessation by early to mid-November. Within the Agropastoral cluster, Baringo and West Pokot also saw early season ends. In contrast, western Kenya and parts of the Rift Valley experienced cessation closer to the normal period, though rainfall frequency and intensity still declined markedly towards season's end. The combination of delayed or false onset, severe localized deficits, poor distribution, and early cessation resulted in a below average and largely ineffective October-November-December 2025 rainy season for most of Kenya. This placed significant stress on crop and livestock production, limited water and pasture regeneration, and heightened livelihood vulnerability—particularly in the arid and semi-arid lands of the north, northeast, and coastal regions.

2.2 Insecurity/Conflict

The main drivers of conflict and insecurity across all clusters were competition over scarce natural resources, cattle rustling, and cross-border or clan tensions, leading to displacement, loss of life and livestock, restricted market access, and disrupted livelihoods. In the Pastoral Northwest, Turkana County experienced border clashes with West Pokot in October, resulting in fatalities, while attacks by militias from a neighboring country affected Kokuro, Todonyang, and other areas. Samburu faced highway banditry along key roads, disrupting markets like Lolkuniany, and influxes of livestock into hotspots such as Loosuk, Poro, Suguta, and Angata Nanyekie worsened forage depletion and therefore posing a significant risk of conflict erupting. Marsabit County saw localized conflicts from September to November 2025, including the loss of around 400 animals in North Horr Sub-County and five deaths in Laisamis Sub-County due to herder clashes, while tensions persisted in Moyale's Korondel area, with resource-driven conflicts expected to continue at least through mid-March 2026.

In the South Eastern Marginal Agriculture cluster, Kitui County reported resource-based conflicts between migrating herders from Tana River, Garissa, and Wajir counties and local farmers in Mutha, Endau/Malalani, Nguni, and Ngomeni Wards, leading some residents to desert their homes, with cases of cattle theft reported in Ngomeni Ward. In Makueni County, the primary driver was increased in-migration of livestock from neighboring counties into Kibwezi West and Kibwezi East sub-counties, intensifying competition over dwindling pasture and water in hotspot wards including Makindu, Kikumbulyu North,

Kikumbulyu South, Nguumo, Masongaleni, Mtito Andei, and Nguu/Masumba. In Meru County, persistent insecurity in Igembe North and Igembe Central restricted access to lower grazing areas, and throughout the reporting period including January 2026, multiple incidents of livestock theft were reported in Igembe Central, Tigania West, and Muthara Ward in Tigania East, with rustlers killing animals outright in some cases; security reservists have been deployed to several locations to contain the situation.

In the Agro pastoral cluster, renewed clashes linked to cattle rustling and resource competition occurred in Transmara South and West in Narok County in December 2025, prompting authorities to impose a curfew that disrupted local markets and limited access to food commodities. A fragile security situation persists in border areas of West Pokot County, including Alale, Kasei, Masool, Lomut, Suam, and Kiwawa. In the Pastoral Northeast cluster, Mandera County experienced militancy incidents and clan conflicts that resulted in livestock losses, while Isiolo County experienced security concerns in Chari and Cherab wards leading herders to relocate livestock to safer areas. Tana River County experienced tensions over land ownership and land grabbing, particularly in mixed farming zones, and Wajir and Garissa counties reported localized insecurity exacerbating vulnerabilities. In the Coastal Marginal Agriculture cluster, Kilifi County reported resource-based conflicts between local communities and pastoralists in Ganze, Magarini, and Malindi sub-counties, but these were largely managed through county-led peace meetings, while Kwale County recorded no significant conflict incidents and Lamu County did not experience any insurgent or terrorist activity.

2.3 Human-Wildlife conflict

Human-wildlife conflict emerged as a severe and widespread threat across several clusters, causing extensive crop destruction, livestock predation, and disruption of essential services. The Agro pastoral cluster bore the brunt of this crisis, particularly in Laikipia County between October 2025 and January 2026. The impact was devastating, with an estimated 70% of crops lost in affected areas including Ngobit, Thingithu, Segera, and Laikipia West. The conflict also disrupted education, affecting 31 schools in the county. Similar incidents were reported in Nyeri (Gakawa Ward), indicating a wider cluster-level challenge. In the South Eastern Marginal Agriculture Cluster, human-wildlife conflict was acute in areas bordering Tsavo East National Park. In Kitui County, elephants destroyed crops and critical water infrastructure. In Kanziko Ward alone, 400 farms averaging three acres each, totaling 1,200 acres, had mature crops destroyed, and water pans were tampered with. The threat was severe enough to cause the closure of seven primary schools in the Kituvwi sub-location for two weeks. In the Coastal Marginal Agriculture Cluster, Taita Taveta County reported significant disruptions to farming due to crop raids by elephants, monkeys, and baboons. Kajiado reported several cases in January 2026 involving stray elephants entering community areas in Mashuuru (Kajiado East), Iloondokilani, and Magadi (Kajiado West).

2.4 Lake Backflows and Flash Floods

Flooding and flash floods were significant shocks impacting several livelihood zones, though with varying severity. In the Agropastoral Cluster, the most severe and protracted flooding event occurred in Baringo County, where rising water levels in Lakes Baringo and Bogoria have caused the prolonged displacement of approximately 1,400 households. This environmental disaster also severed the vital Marigat–Chemolingot tarmac road at Loruk, critically disrupting transport and access to essential services. Elsewhere in the cluster, Laikipia County reported flash flooding as one of the primary disruptors to education, contributing to interruptions in student attendance at 158 schools. Within the Pastoral Northwest Cluster, Turkana County continues to face a profound and ongoing environmental shock from the Lake Turkana backflow, which is causing permanent displacement and business closures in lakeward wards with no signs of abatement. Impacts in the Pastoral Northeast Cluster were mixed. Tana River County experienced only minimal flash flooding in marginal mixed and mixed farming zones. These flash floods did not disrupt essential services and instead allowed for the limited planting of early-maturing crops like melons, green grams, and cowpeas, with minimal recharge of water sources. In contrast, Isiolo County was more seriously affected, where flash floods in Burat, Bulapesa, and Wabera wards impacted over 2,600 households and resulted in minor fatalities. The severity of these flash floods was mitigated by pre-existing protective measures, including diversion channels in Merti.

2.5 Below Average Crop Production

Below-average and failed crop production was a catastrophic and widespread shock across all agricultural livelihood clusters, fundamentally driven by persistent drought but severely compounded by pests, diseases, and adverse weather. In the Agropastoral Cluster, extended dry spells in West Pokot caused an estimated 13% loss in maize production, with a further 15% of the harvest damaged by post-harvest rains. The Pastoral Northeast Cluster reported minimal to moderate harvests due to erratic and early cessation of rains in Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa, while Isiolo suffered moderate to high losses in maize, legumes, and onions. The most devastating losses occurred in the South Eastern Marginal Agriculture Cluster, where Embu (Mbeere) saw near-total failure, Kitui experienced a 95% loss across all crops (97% for maize), and Makueni's maize output fell 55% below the five-year average, with many households facing total crop failure. Similarly, the Coastal Marginal Agriculture Cluster experienced near to total crop failure due to drought and Fall Armyworm infestations. This drastic, widespread reduction in harvests was a primary driver of the severe food price inflation and acute household food access crises reported throughout the regions.

2.6 Disease Outbreaks – Human and Livestock

The reporting period was marked by severe and concurrent disease outbreaks in human and livestock populations, representing a dual shock that critically strained public health and veterinary systems, eroded household assets, and heightened the risk of malnutrition. Human health crises included acute outbreaks of water and vector-borne diseases: a

cholera outbreak in Narok's Transmara West and South sub-counties resulted in 107 confirmed cases and 7 fatalities as of early October 2025, with additional cases reported in Tana River County. Simultaneously, severe outbreaks of Kala-Azar (visceral leishmaniasis) were recorded in the arid counties of Turkana, Wajir, and Mandera, necessitating emergency health responses. The livestock health situation deteriorated significantly, with disease incidence driven by the compounding effects of drought. The congregation of large numbers of stressed, nutritionally weak animals at dwindling water points and grazing areas, combined with long trekking distances during migration and critical gaps in vaccination coverage, created ideal conditions for epidemic disease spread. Multiple, concurrent outbreaks of both notifiable and endemic diseases were reported across clusters. Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) were widespread, reported in the Agropastoral Cluster (Kajiado, Laikipia, Narok) and the Pastoral Northwest Cluster (Turkana, Samburu). Small ruminants were heavily affected by Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), with outbreaks also noted in Laikipia and Isiolo. Other serious diseases included Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) and Rift Valley Fever in Mandera, Newcastle Disease in poultry in Turkana, and Sheep and Goat Pox in Tana River. Counties such as Marsabit, Turkana, Wajir, and Mandera reported particularly high prevalence and concurrent outbreaks. The consequences were dire: reduced milk and meat productivity, high mortality rates, and a catastrophic loss of household income and dietary protein. Furthermore, these conditions, fueled by extensive cross-border and inter-county livestock movements, significantly heightened the risk of transnational disease transmission into Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan, complicating regional containment efforts. While response measures were initiated, such as the vaccination of approximately 45,000 cattle against FMD in Kajiado between October and December 2025, the scale of the challenge demands an immediate and coordinated escalation. Critical priorities include the rapid scaling up of mass vaccination campaigns, enhanced community-based disease surveillance along migration routes and markets, strengthened vector control, and improved cross-border coordination to contain these threats and protect core breeding herds.

2.7 Crop and Livestock Pests

Pest infestations, particularly Fall Armyworm (FAW), acted as both acute shocks and chronic hazards, attacking crops and compounding losses from drought. Fall Armyworm was a prevalent and damaging pest reported across multiple clusters: it infested about 6% of maize fields in West Pokot, affected maize in Isiolo and Tana River, was observed in Meru, and was a key factor in reducing yields in the Coastal Marginal Agriculture Cluster. Beyond FAW, other crop pests caused significant damage, including quelea birds destroying 1,186 acres of sorghum and millet in Kitui, and various blights, nematodes, aphids, thrips, and *Tuta absoluta* affecting crops in Narok, West Pokot, and Isiolo. Livestock pests were also a major concern, with widespread tick infestations reported in Isiolo, Tana River, Mandera, and Kitui, raising the risk of deadly tick-borne diseases like East Coast Fever. These biological hazards, both endemic and invasive, consistently reduced yields, increased production costs, and threatened a key source of household income, thereby eroding food availability and livelihood resilience.

2.8 High staple food prices

High staple food prices emerged as a critical and widespread shock across all livelihood clusters, creating a severe access crisis for households already grappling with diminished harvests and depleted food stocks. In the Agropastoral Cluster, prices surged due to low local production and high demand; in Narok, the price of a 2kg tin of maize rose to KES 110–120, while in West Pokot, maize prices from November 2025 to January 2026 were approximately 5% above the long-term average, coinciding with a 20% depletion of household stocks. The Pastoral Northeast Cluster faced similar pressures, with Garissa recording high prices due to inflation, fuel costs, and poor infrastructure, and Isiolo experiencing parallel trends that contributed to malnutrition risks. The most acute price shocks were reported in the South Eastern Marginal Agriculture Cluster, where the drastic reduction in local harvests triggered sustained high costs. In Kitui, maize retailed at KES 60–80/kg and beans at KES 130–200/kg, while in Makueni, January 2026 prices averaged KES 59/kg for maize and KES 150/kg for beans, 15% and 10% above their five-year averages, with the highest prices in remote areas due to scarce supply and high transport costs. The Coastal Marginal Agriculture Cluster also observed high food prices and low purchasing power due to consecutive poor seasons and limited market supply. Across all affected areas, this price surge critically constrained household purchasing power, particularly as many families simultaneously faced low livestock prices, forcing them to rely on negative coping strategies such as reducing meals, borrowing, and selling assets.

2.9 Humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian assistance in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyi is the main source of food for most of the households but it remains strained as funding shortfalls continue to disrupt essential services. The humanitarian situation across Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyi is extremely fragile, with multiple indicators showing deepening vulnerability. Households are facing severe economic strain, with incomes consistently falling below expenditures,

forcing households into debt and reliance on negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies. In addition, the reduced funding has forced prioritization of the most vulnerable while others receive half or no assistance at all. Conditions have further deteriorated, with WFP cutting food rations to just 60% for category 1, 40% for category 2 and 20% for category 3 of the minimum food basket without complementary assistance from other partners due to severe funding gaps, leaving food insecurity as the most urgent need across the camps.

3.0 | SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Trends on Population in Need

Currently, **an estimated 3.3 million people in the ASAL counties, up from 1.8 million people in July to September 2025, are facing acute food insecurity**, IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse) and require immediate assistance. Of these, about **400,000 people are experiencing Emergency level food insecurity (IPC Phase 4)**. Populations in Emergency are concentrated in Mandera, Tana River, Turkana and Wajir, Marsabit, Samburu and Garissa counties.

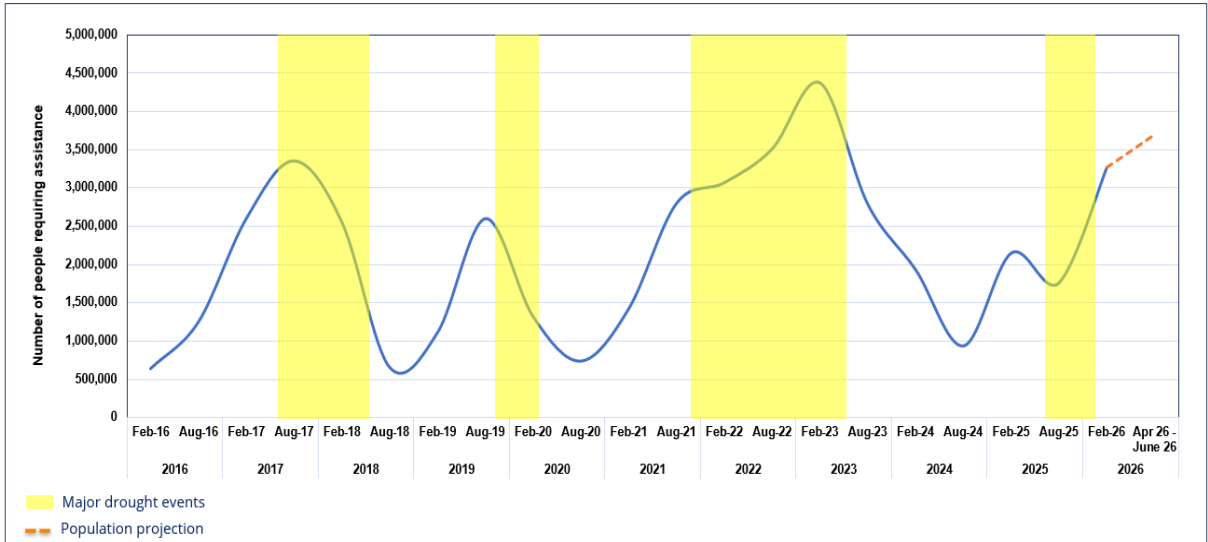


Figure 2: Trends in Population in Need

The food security situation has deteriorated following the below-average and erratic performance of the October-November-December 2025 short-rains season, which resulted in widespread crop failure, poor pasture regeneration and poorly recharged water sources. Climatic shocks were compounded by rising insecurity, lake backflows, and extensive crop and livestock pest infestations, leading to reduced harvests, weakened herds, and heightened household vulnerability. Staple food prices increased sharply across livelihood zones, eroding purchasing power at a time when household food stocks were already depleted.

The situation in the ASAL counties is projected to deteriorate through June 2026 due to the forecasted below-average March-May Long Rains season, **with approximately 3.7**

million people likely to experience acute food insecurity by the end of the season and **Mandera County likely to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4)**.

In Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei integrated settlements, about two thirds of the population **(0.43 million people) are currently facing acute food insecurity, IPC phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse) and all the three camps are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4)**. Food insecurity in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei is mainly driven by reduced humanitarian assistance, limited livelihood opportunities, and rising market dependence coinciding with high staple food prices. Despite continued efforts of stakeholders to provide humanitarian assistance, the situation is projected to remain relatively similar unless a significant increase in humanitarian assistance (food, non-food and livelihood support) is provided to improve availability, access, and utilization of food over the projection period.

3.2 Food Consumption and Coping Strategies

Food consumption outcomes in January 2026 varied significantly across Kenya's livelihood clusters, driven by differences in production performance, market access, and dietary diversity.

- **In Pastoral Areas**, Food Consumption Score (FCS) analysis indicates that **Mandera** recorded the highest proportion of households within the *poor* consumption category (50%), reflecting severely constrained dietary diversity predominantly characterized by staple cereals with limited complementary food groups such as milk. **Turkana** and **Marsabit** registered 24% and 19% of households within the same band, respectively. In the remaining pastoral counties — **Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Tana River, and Samburu** — the proportion of households classified as having a poor FCS ranged between 9% and 23%, while a substantial share (29–55%) fell within the *borderline* FCS category.
- **In Agro-pastoral Areas**, FCS outcomes show that **Narok** recorded the strongest performance, with 96% of households classified within the *acceptable* consumption category, indicating comparatively stable dietary access and diversity. In contrast, **Baringo, West Pokot, and Laikipia** registered between 2% and 13% of households in the *poor* FCS category, alongside a substantial proportion (43–57%) in the *borderline* category.
- **Marginal Agricultural Areas** showed mixed outcomes: **Makueni, Kilifi, and Taita Taveta** recorded predominantly *acceptable* consumption levels (78–80% of households), indicating relatively stable dietary access. Conversely, **Meru, Lamu, and Kwale** registered between 15% and 44% of households within the *poor* FCS category, reflecting limited dietary diversity and low access to protein-rich foods.
- **In the camps**, over a third of the households were facing large food consumption gaps with 41% in Kalobeyei, 38% in Kakuma and 35% in Dadaab considered to be having poor FCS.

Across all clusters, diets remained heavily cereal-based, with low protein and micronutrient intake, posing continued malnutrition risks, especially for women and children.

Coping strategies closely mirrored food consumption outcomes, with households across the ASAL counties and refugee camps relying heavily on both consumption- and livelihood-based measures.

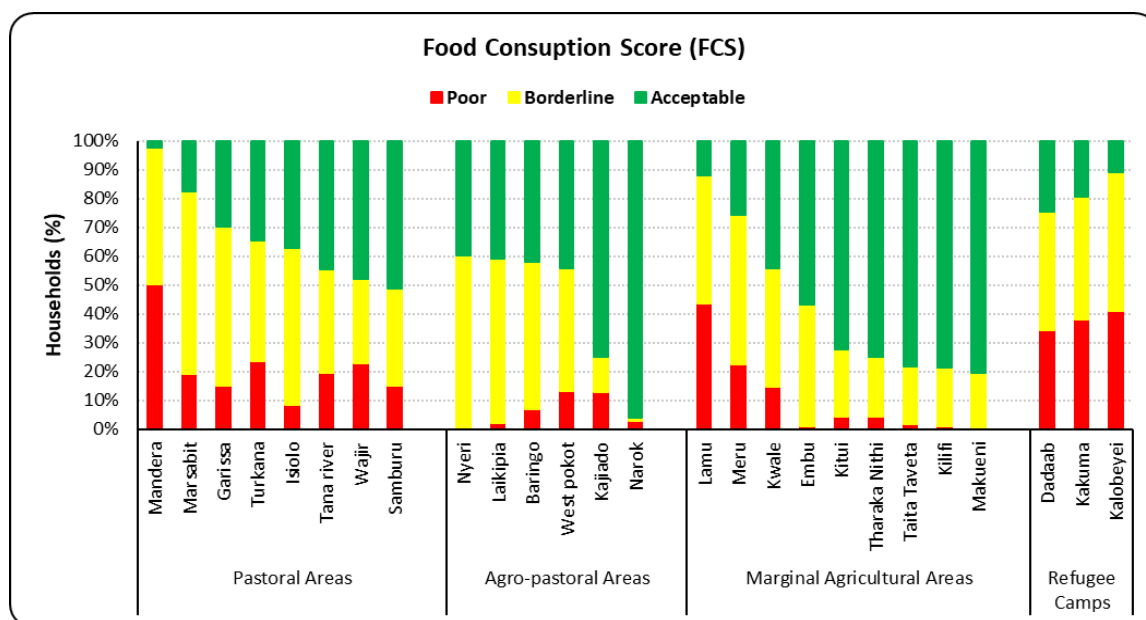


Figure 3: Trends in Food Consumption

- **In Pastoral Areas**, crisis-level consumption coping was highest in Marsabit (43%), Turkana (35%), Samburu (28%), and Garissa (26%), while stressed coping dominated Mandera (94%), Isiolo (81%), Tana River (78%), and Wajir (57%). Livelihood coping indicated emerging erosion of household resilience, most pronounced in Marsabit (43% crisis) and Turkana (27%), whereas Mandera, Garissa, and Samburu reported minimal livelihood coping, suggesting delayed but potential asset depletion.
- **In Agro-pastoral Areas**, stressed consumption coping affected 46–70% of households, with crisis-level coping generally low (peaking at 22% in Baringo), while livelihood coping remained moderate, notably in Laikipia (64% stressed).
- **Marginal Agricultural Areas** experienced localized severe stress, particularly in Meru (50% crisis consumption), Tharaka Nithi (38%), Kwale (21%), Lamu (19%) and Makueni (18%), with crisis-level livelihood coping observed mainly in Meru (21%), Kwale (21%) and Kilifi (15%).

- **In the refugee camps**, more than half of the population used crisis-level consumption-based strategies as well as livelihood strategies to cope with lack of adequate food.

Across all clusters, households primarily reduced meal portions, skipped meals, and consumed less preferred foods, with the most severe coping concentrated in Pastoral and select Marginal Agricultural counties, highlighting acute vulnerability despite relatively better conditions in other areas. Common livelihood coping measures across clusters included selling assets, borrowing, reducing non-food spending, and using savings.

3.3 Categories of Food Insecure Population

The October-November-December 'Long rains' season was characterized by a poor performance across most parts of the country especially the ASALs. After the Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) was conducted, an overall worsened food security situation was noted across all the 23 counties that were assessed and analyzed. During the current analysis period which looked at the food security situation after October-November-December, nine (9) counties were classified to be in IPC phase 3 (Crisis) up from only three (3) counties that were in crisis during the July/August analysis after the 2025 long rains.

For the first time, an IPC analysis was also conducted for the three refugee camps in Kenya (Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei) where all the three camps were classified to be in IPC phase 4 (Emergency) with populations across all phases as described below.

This analysis was conducted using the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Protocols which identify areas and populations experiencing food deprivation that threatens lives or livelihoods. The analysis classified households into five severity phases¹. Households classified in phase 3 (Crisis) or worse are considered to have urgent need for humanitarian assistance required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps, save lives and livelihoods (in emergency category) and prevent widespread death and total collapse of livelihoods for worst phase 5 (catastrophe).

3.3.1 Current Population (February – March 2026)

a) Arid and Semi-Arid Counties (ASALs)

The current food security situation has worsened with the estimated number of people requiring humanitarian assistance increasing to 3.3 million compared to 1.8 million in

¹ **IPC severity phases: Phase 1 (None or minimal), Phase 2 (Stressed), Phase 3 (Crisis)** meaning Households either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis. **IPC Phase 4 (Emergency)** meaning Households either have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or can mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation and **IPC Phase 5: Catastrophe** where Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident.

August 2025. Out of this population approximately 2.9 million are in IPC phase 3 (Crisis) while about 400,000 persons are in IPC phase 4 (Emergency). The population in IPC 4 (Emergency) is an increase from about 180,000 persons in August 2025 a number that is also projected to increase through June 2026.

Further with the deteriorated food insecurity situation, the number of counties classified to be in Crisis increased to nine up from three in August. While only Turkana Marsabit and Mandera were in IPC phase 3 in August 2025, currently, Samburu, Isiolo, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River and Kwale have also changed phase in addition to the three. Notably all the counties across the ASAL areas have population in need of assistance (phase 3 or worse) as shown in the table below, only that they did not meet the 20% threshold as per the IPC protocols for the whole county to be classified in that phase.

b) Refugees (Dadaab, Kakuma and Kalobeyei)

The current analysis was also conducted for the refugee population, where it was established that about 429,500 (approximately 60%) refugees were in IPC 3 or worse. Of these, about 243,000 were in IPC 3 while 186,500 were in IPC 4. Dadaab had the highest proportion with IPC 3 or worse, totalling to about 240,400 followed by Kakuma about 132,600 and Kalobeyei about 54,400. Proportionally however, Kalobeyei had about 60% of the population in IPC 3 or worse followed by Kakuma (60%) and Dadaab (55%).

3.3.2 Projected Population (April – June 2026)

During the projection period April – June 2026, the analysis showed that the food security situation will either worsen or remain the same in most of the counties. There are no significant improvements expected with a forecasted average to near average rainfall across most of the ASAL areas considering that rainfall performance is the main driver of food security across the livelihood zones. During the projection period food security situation in Mandera county is likely to deteriorate further and worse compared to other counties and is projected to be in IPC phase 4.

During the projected period, (April – June 2026) it is expected that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance will increase from the current 3.3 million to approximately 3.7 million. For the ASAL counties. Among these, the population in Crisis (IPC3) is likely to increase from the current 2.9 million to 3.1 million while the population in (IPC 4) emergency is likely to increase from the current 400,000 to about 550,000 persons.

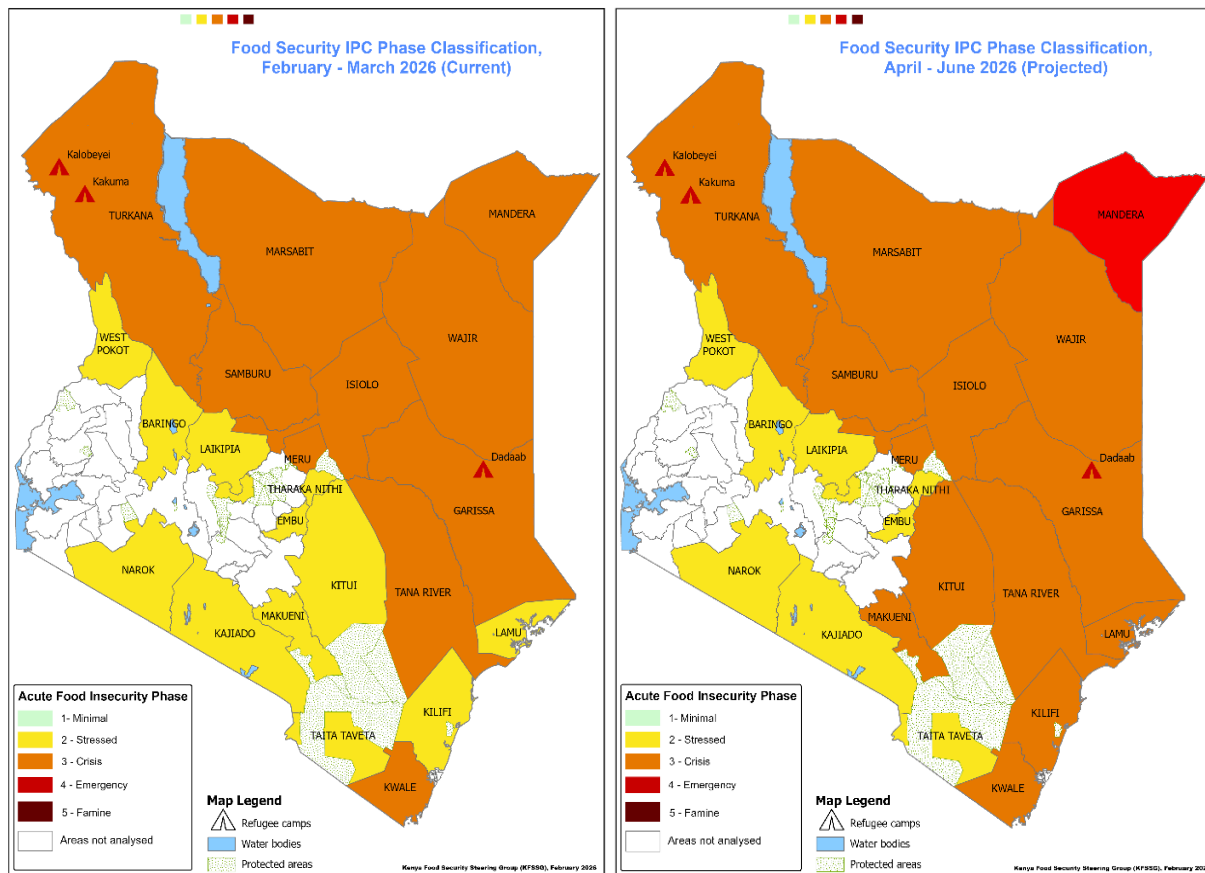


Figure 4: Current and Projected IPC Classification Maps

For the refugee situation, food security situation is not expected to have any significant improvement in the projection period. Despite the slight increase for the food rations for various categories under the Differentiated Assistance (DA), the impact of the food security situation may not be enough to change the IPC classification, especially due to the overall reduced assistance for the refugees for both food and non-food interventions.

3.3.3 Population in Need -Distribution by Counties

During the current analysis, In February – March 2026, Mander, Turkana, Garissa, Wajir, Tana River, Marsabit and Samburu had populations in IPC 4 (emergency), while all other counties had some population in IPC 3 (crisis). During the Projection period, the food security situation is expected to worsen with population in IPC 4 in Mander increasing from current 151,000 to about 200,400 and in Wajir increasing from 45,000 persons to about 92,000 persons. Other counties expected to further deteriorate are, Kwale with estimated 49,400 people falling into emergency and increased number of persons in IPC 3 (Crisis) in counties like Kitui, Isiolo, Kilifi, Lamu, Makueni, Samburu and West Pokot

	County	County population (KNBS 2025 projection)	Population in need of urgent food assistance	Projected population in need of urgent food assistance
			Feb - Mar 2026	April – June 2026
1	Turkana	1,074,000	322,200	322,200
2	Garissa	971,000	242,750	242,750
3	Mandera	1,007,000	503,500	604,200
4	Wajir	915,000	274,500	366,000
5	Marsabit	539,000	134,750	134,750
6	Kwale	988,000	197,600	247,000
7	Samburu	367,000	73,400	91,750
8	Tana River	370,000	203,500	185,000
9	Isiolo	330,000	82,500	66,000
10	Kitui	1,259,000	188,850	251,800
11	Meru North	994,000	198,800	198,800
12	Kajiado	730,400	66,400	66,400
13	Kilifi	1,637,000	245,550	327,400
14	Makueni	1,065,000	159,750	213,000
15	Laikipia	583,000	29,150	29,150
16	Baringo	764,000	114,600	114,600
17	Tharaka Nithi	284,700	28,470	42,705
18	Embu(Mbeere)	296,000	14,800	14,800
19	Taita taveta	373,000	18,650	18,650
20	Narok	1,355,000	67,750	67,750
21	Nyeri(kieni)	223,500	11,175	11,175
22	Lamu	176,000	26,400	35,200
23	West Pokot	706,000	70,600	35,300
		17,007,600	3,275,645	3,686,380

In the Refugee camps the observed food security situation is unlikely to change between February and June 2026 with main factors to monitor including the humanitarian assistance consistency, and inflow of new arrivals that may lead to a worsened situation.

3.4 Nutrition Situation Overview

The IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN) analysis conducted in February 2026 shows that the nutrition situation is of concern, with variation in severity across areas of analysis. Ten counties have high levels of acute malnutrition in phase 3 and above. Three analysis areas are classified in IPC AMN Phase 5 (Extremely Critical), Mandera, North Horr-(Marsabit), and Turkana South/East, where the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months reaches the highest IPC thresholds. Nine areas are classified in Phase 4 (Critical), includes Turkana West, Turkana North/Kibish, Turkana Central/Loima, Laisamis/Loyangalani (Marsabit), Garissa, Isiolo, Wajir, Samburu, and Baringo East (Tiaty).

Four areas are classified in Phase 3 (Serious) Tana River, West Pokot, Saku (Marsabit), and Moyale (Marsabit), while eight are classified in Phase 2 (Alert), namely Baringo North/South, Kajiado, Laikipia, Narok, Kwale, Taita Taveta, Kitui, and Makueni. Two areas, Kilifi and Lamu, are classified in Phase 1. Compared with the October 2024 to January 2025 period, the analysis indicates deterioration with some areas deteriorating to a more severe phase, while others remain in the same phase but record higher levels of acute malnutrition, reflecting worsening conditions within and across phases.

Major contributing factors to acute malnutrition during the period include limited access to adequate and diverse diets for young children, persistent disease burden, and uneven access to essential health and nutrition services. Constraints on food availability and diet quality reduce children's ability to meet minimum nutritional requirements, while frequent illness particularly diarrhoeal disease, continues to compromise nutritional status. Sub optimal e access and utilisation of preventive and curative services further limit early identification and management of malnutrition. These factors interact and reinforce one another, contributing to sustained acute malnutrition among children under five years of age.

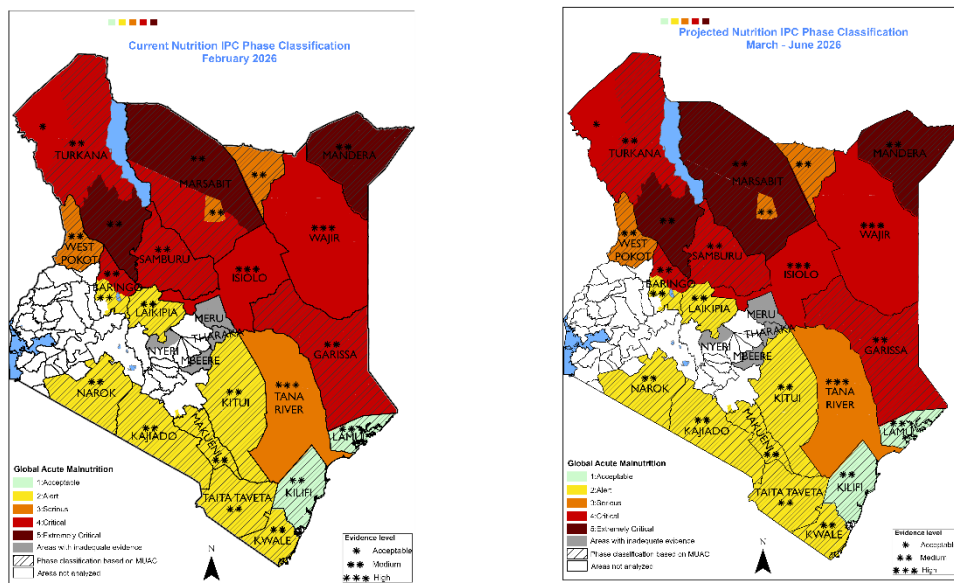


Figure 5: Current and Projected Nutrition Phase Classification

Upper Respiratory Tract Infection caseloads are above long-term averages in North Horr, Garissa, Wajir, Mandera and Laikipia. While Malaria incidence remains elevated in endemic zones, including parts of Turkana, West Pokot and Baringo. There were also localized outbreaks reported, Measles cases in West Pokot, Baringo (Tiaty), and Kilifi, and Cholera cases in Narok (249). Kala-azar cases West Pokot and Mpox isolated cases in Kajiado, Narok and Baringo.

During the season preventive programs had sub optimal coverage and variations across the areas. Fully immunized child (FIC) coverage remains below the 90% national target. Vitamin A supplementation coverage was below the national target in many counties, linked to reduced outreach activities. Deworming coverage among children 12-59 months remained below target in several areas, limiting protection against infection-related nutrient losses. Lowest coverage was reported in parts of Lamu, Tana River and Mandera where health access constraints, and outreach scale-downs are reported.

Integrated management of Acute Malnutrition recorded low admissions in 2025 due to Stock out of Moderate Acute Malnutrition commodities. Scale down Interventions; outreaches and active case finding. Lowest reported in Mandera and Tana River (8%), Isiolo (19%) Garissa (23%). Overall outreach coverage across the assessed counties stands at 24%.

Childcare and dietary practices remained suboptimal across analysis areas with pastoral areas reporting poor food consumption scores and proportions of households with reduced coping strategy food based and livelihood coping strategies. Severe child food poverty has increased markedly in Wajir (27.5% in 2024 to 45.0% in 2026), indicating that nearly half of children are unable to access a minimally diverse diet. Tana River continues to show persistently high levels of severe child food poverty ($\approx 39\%$), reflecting sustained dietary vulnerability.

WASH practices remain sub optimal across the clusters and is a high-risk factor ($< 70\%$) to acute malnutrition. In Smart survey 2026, water treatment remains low, particularly in Wajir (15%), increasing exposure to waterborne diseases. Open defecation persists, especially in Tana River (36.6%), sustaining diarrheal risk. Access to improved water sources is relatively low in Tana River at 59%. Only about half of households meet minimum per capita water consumption standards ($\geq 15\text{L/person/day}$), limiting hygiene practices.

Table 1: Estimated Caseloads and Targets of Children 6-59 months and Pregnant & Breastfeeding Women Requiring Treatment for Acute Malnutrition

	Global Acute Malnutrition		Moderate Acute Malnutrition		Severe Acute Malnutrition		Pregnant and breastfeeding women	
	6 to 59 months		6 to 59 months		6 to 59 months			
Area	Total Case load	Target	Total Case load	Target	Total Case load	Target	Total Case load	Target
ASAL	499,857	278,275	386,471	193,235	113,387	85,040	114,828	114,828
URBAN	85,914	52,166	49,075	24,538	36,838	27,629	900	900
NON ASAL	225,100	125,551	173,095	86,547	52,005	39,004	1,068	1,068
TOTAL	810,871	455,993	608,641	304,320	202,230	151,673	116,796	116,796

The number of children aged 6-59 months expected to be acutely malnourished during the current reporting period has increased from 741,883 in July/August 2025 to 810,871 in February 2026, indicating a worsening nutrition situation. The increase is driven by diminishing nutrition interventions such as integrated outreaches for over the same period, the number of pregnant and breastfeeding women expected to be acutely malnourished increases from 109,462 to 116,796, reflecting heightened vulnerability among this group. Overall, the comparison indicates an increase in the acute malnutrition caseload relative to the previous assessment period.

3.4.1 Key proposed response actions

- Procurement commodity for management of acute malnutrition, to ensure consistency of supplies for treatment sustainability
- Heightened Nutrition surveillance, situation monitoring and coordination.
- Nutrition response planning and resource mobilization.
- Hotspot mapping and prioritization of outreach sites
- Scale up of integrated health and nutrition outreaches and mass screening.
- Invest in Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) strategies to improve infant & young child feeding (IYCF), maternal nutrition & WASH practices
- Initiate and scale up community-based approaches to address poor dietary intake among children 6 to 23 months
- Sustain disease Surveillance and response to outbreaks
- Advocate for counties to finance data and surveillance activities to allow for comprehensive nutrition situation analysis.
- Implement of multisectoral responses and interventions to address immediate needs with complementary actions to build resilience of communities.
- Enhance community-based programs to improve coverage or early detection & treatment of acute malnutrition.

3.4.2 Factors to monitor

- Rainfall performance of March-May long rains season and other climatic conditions
- Humanitarian assistance particularly for refugees
- Market functionality and price of staples and household food stocks
- Food security situation given the large food consumption gaps
- Assess the availability, stock levels, and distribution efficiency of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) commodities.
- Availability of water for domestic use
- Crop pest and livestock diseases
- Nutrition situation across the country given the high levels of acute malnutrition in arid counties
- Emergency response funding situation.
- Effects of commodity stock outs on Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) program coverage and treatment outcomes.
- Morbidities and disease outbreaks
- Sanitation and Hygiene situation
- Coverage of integrated Health and Nutrition outreaches.
- Social protection program coverage for the most vulnerable population.

3.5 Crop Production Prospects

The cumulative national maize production from the 2025 long and short rains seasons is projected at 4.2 million tonnes, representing a 10–15 percent increase above the long-term average. However, this overall improvement was not reflected in the ASAL areas, where the achieved short rains maize production was about 106,958 tonnes which is about 68 percent of the long-term average. Meanwhile, cumulative beans production is projected at 704,914 tonnes, approximately eight percent below the long-term average. The production of beans in the ASAL counties was 275,967 tonnes which was 62 percent below the long-term average.

In the high and medium rainfall areas, rainfed crop production showed mixed outcomes during the short rains season. South Rift, Western, and Nyanza regions experienced moisture stress, high temperatures, and pest infestations leading to decline in maize and beans production. The ASAL counties reported poor performance of key staple crops, driven by erratic rainfall, prolonged dry spells, widespread pest and disease infestations, and structural constraints that collectively limited production.

In the Agro-pastoral cluster, production of maize, beans, and Irish potatoes was 61, 54, and 15 percent below the long-term average, respectively. Key constraints included uneven rainfall distribution, limited access to quality seeds and fertilizers, pest and disease

infestations, notably fall armyworm (Narok, Laikipia, Baringo), maize lethal necrosis disease and Human–wildlife conflict in Narok and Laikipia.

The South Eastern Marginal cluster rain-fed Production of sorghum, beans, maize and green grams was at 25, 26, 30 and 35 percent of long-term average respectively. Prolonged dry spells, high input costs, and reliance on recycled seeds were major challenges. Farmers in Makueni County expanded acreage under drought-tolerant pulses such as cowpeas and green grams.

In the Pastoral North-West cluster, rain-fed crop production declined sharply across all crops compared to the long-term average (long-term average), with beans and maize production being below the long-term average by 98 and 96 percent accordingly, and cowpeas recording a total failure. The main challenges were drought, limited access to mechanization services, high input costs, and pests such as stalk borers and cutworms. Total crop failure was reported in Turkana and parts of Marsabit, despite government and partner support through capacity building and input provision (particularly in Marsabit County).

In the Pastoral North Eastern cluster, rain-fed maize, cowpeas, and green gram production was 12, 23, and 28 percent of the long-term average, respectively. Drought-induced crop damage occurred at critical growth stages of maize before tasseling and legumes during flowering resulting in near-total crop failure in most parts of Mandera and Isiolo counties. Pest and disease infestations, notably fall armyworm, were experienced across the cluster. Other challenges included high input costs and limited access to certified seeds, which restricted the acreage under cultivation.

In the Coast Marginal Agriculture cluster, production for rain-fed maize and cowpeas was at 12 and 14 percent of long-term average respectively. The decline in production was attributed to delayed and insufficient rainfall, pest infestations, and wildlife intrusions, particularly elephants.

The main irrigated crop production across the clusters were onions, tomatoes, beans, cabbage, carrots, green grams, kale, maize, and watermelon grown on a smaller scale. Performance of these irrigated crops varied widely, with counties having reliable irrigation and strong market linkages achieving moderate production to significantly above the long-term average, while areas constrained by water shortages, pests, high input costs, and human–wildlife conflict recorded below- or near-average yields.

Rice production in the Pastoral North Eastern Cluster increased by 330 percent above the long-term average due to well-functioning irrigation schemes in Tana River, while beans in the Agro-Pastoral Cluster recorded the highest increase at 220 percent above the long-term average, with cabbage and onions up by 51 and 13 percent. The drivers of the recorded improvement were expanded acreage, contract farming, improved credit, and strong market demand that further boosted onion production in Nyeri and West Pokot. In the South Eastern Marginal Cluster, watermelon production was 71 percent above the

long-term average as a consequence of irrigation expansion and favorable market incentives.

The Pastoral North Eastern Cluster recorded poor performance of irrigated crops. Irrigation infrastructure that was damaged by flood in Garissa County (in the previous season), high rehabilitation costs, and limited access to water were some of the factors driving the poor performance. Similarly, in the Pastoral North Western Cluster, irrigated maize and sorghum production declined to 46 percent of the long-term average, particularly in Turkana, mainly due to low river levels, dilapidated irrigation systems, and high input costs. Tomato production in parts of the Agro-Pastoral and Coastal Marginal clusters also performed poorly as a result of viral diseases and whitefly infestation.

The total maize stock in the ASAL counties is about 81 percent of LTA, of which 86 percent is in the Agropastoral cluster. Maize and sorghum with farmers are at 77 and 26 percent of LTA, respectively, while beans and green grams are available only in small quantities. In Laikipia and Baringo, maize stocks are above average and near average, attributed to carryover stocks from the previous season. Farmers in Baringo are holding maize stocks in anticipation of higher prices. Maize and sorghum stock with traders are both at 87 percent of LTA, while bean stock is at 94 percent of LTA. There is enhanced supply from high-potential areas and cross-border inflows, particularly maize from Trans-Nzoia and Uganda into West Pokot. Household maize stocks are expected to last less than one month in the Pastoral livelihood zone and 1–3 months in other livelihood zones.

3.6 Livestock Productivity

Livestock production contributes about 80 percent and 50 percent to cash income among pastoral and agro-pastoral households, respectively. The pasture and browse conditions were generally fair to poor across the clusters and were projected to last two months compared to the normal three months. The pasture and browse conditions were very poor and worsening in Mandera and Wajir counties. Factors limiting access to pasture and browse included fear of insecurity and conflict, invasive plant species, water scarcity, livestock diseases, and pests. Pasture conservation practices were generally low, with hay stores at 30 percent utilisation of capacity. A weak conservation culture and equipment gaps were reported as the main factors hindering conservation.

Livestock body conditions were generally poor in Mandera for all livestock species and ranged from fair to poor in Wajir, Garissa, and Tana River counties. Livestock body conditions were reported as generally fair to good in other ASAL counties compared to good normally. The average household livestock assets (Tropical Livestock Units) were 50 percent below the 10-year long-term averages in both poor and middle-income households across the ASAL counties.

Milk production and consumption had reduced by about 55 percent compared to long-term averages across all livelihood zones. Mandera County recorded the highest reduction in milk production and consumption at about 90 percent below normal. Milk prices

significantly increased in Mandera, Wajir, and Isiolo from an average of Ksh 70 to Ksh 150 per litre (120 percent above normal) in both pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones. However, milk prices were relatively stable and within normal ranges in other ASAL counties.

There were increasing cases of abnormal livestock migrations, both internal and external, to dry-season grazing areas, including riverine and forested zones. Massive livestock movements were reported across Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana, Wajir, and Mandera, with significant cross-border flows into neighbouring counties and countries (Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan). A large section of the pastoral zones experienced a period of resource-based conflict calmness largely attributed to intelligence-led disarmament efforts in previously conflict-prone areas.

However, Narok County reported resource-based conflict and cattle rustling between local communities in Trans Mara South and West, which led to an imposed curfew and disruption of market operations. There are fears of insecurity along resource-based conflict hotspots (banditry and cattle rustling) in the Isiolo–Garissa, Isiolo–Wajir, Isiolo–Samburu, Oldonyiro–Laikipia, and Isiolo–Marsabit borders. There were increasing incidences of human-wildlife conflict, especially in areas bordering national parks and conservancies (Kajiado, Isiolo, Kilifi, Kitui, Laikipia, Lamu, and Taita Taveta).

Livestock disease incidence increased significantly, driven by livestock congregations at limited water and pasture points, deteriorating livestock body conditions, and gaps in vaccination coverage. Marsabit, Turkana, Wajir, and Mandera counties reported high prevalence and concurrent outbreaks. The most common notifiable and endemic livestock diseases reported included Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP), Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), and various vector-borne infections.

Livestock mortalities were within the normal range of up to one percent in 16 out of 23 ASAL counties. Seven counties reported mortality rates above one percent, including Mandera (in cattle and sheep), Marsabit, Wajir, Baringo, Kitui, Turkana, and Narok. Mandera reported the loss of 29,664 livestock as a result of predation, disease spread at concentration points, and starvation. Marsabit County reported the loss of 50,136 sheep and goats as a result of CCPP and PPR diseases. Kitui County reported high goat mortality due to increased vectors causing livestock diseases.

3.7 Water Situation

The water situation has generally worsened due to poor rainfall performance across the ASALs. Open water sources were inadequately recharged, with the majority receiving 20–50 percent of their capacity in most areas. However, isolated counties such as Turkana and a few counties in the agro-pastoral clusters recorded a fair recharge of about 60

percent. Over 90% of the open water sources have dried up in counties in the North Eastern region, while 70% have dried up in Marsabit and the pastoral livelihood zones of Samburu. High siltation and poor design of most water pans across the clusters have hampered the capacity of reservoirs to hold water.

On the other hand, boreholes are overstretched in terms of operating hours, leading to frequent breakdowns that severely hamper water availability. Significant cases of broken-down boreholes have been reported. For instance, there are 302, 73, and 168 non-functional boreholes in Turkana, Tharaka, and Kitui, respectively, attributed to various reasons ranging from unavailability of spare parts, damage to submersible pumps, vandalism, dilapidated pipes, and drilled and capped boreholes, among others. The remaining water in open water sources such as dams and pans is expected to last for 1–2 months compared to the usual three months, with the exception of isolated areas in Turkana, where it might last for three months. Shallow wells in Shella, Faza, Mtangawanda, and Shanga in Lamu have recorded increased salinity due to low freshwater recharge.

There was an observed increase in return trekking distance from households to water sources across the clusters, especially in areas that rely on water pans and seasonal rivers. For example, in the pastoral zones of Samburu, Laikipia, Narok, Garissa, and Turkana, the distance increased from the normal 3–7 km to the current 7–15 km. Return distances to water sources remained normal at 1–4 km in Kitui, Embu, Isiolo, Kwale, Kilifi, and Taita Taveta counties. The increase in distance is attributed to the drying up of open water sources as well as the breakdown of boreholes, forcing households to walk farther in search of alternative water sources.

There was a noted increase in waiting time across the clusters, with the exception of Isiolo, the agro-pastoral zones of Samburu, rainfed livelihood zones, as well as the mixed farming zones of Makueni, Embu, and Kwale, and the horticulture/dairy and irrigation livelihood zones of Taita Taveta. Areas where waiting time increased rely on boreholes and piped water schemes, as most seasonal water sources have dried up. The highest increase was noted in Marsabit County, where the waiting time increased from the normal 30–45 minutes to the current 90–120 minutes in the pastoral livelihood zone. Waiting time in the agro-pastoral livelihood zones also increased from the normal 45–60 minutes to the current 120–240 minutes. The increase in waiting time was mainly attributed to the high concentration of people and livestock at the available water sources following the drying up of most open water sources and the breakdown of other alternative sources such as boreholes. A high influx of people and livestock has been witnessed in Kilifi and most counties in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country.

The cost of a 20-litre jerrican of water remained within the normal range of Ksh 5–10 across the clusters, with some areas accessing water at Ksh 2–5 per 20-litre jerrican. The sale of water by vendors ranged from Ksh 20–50 per 20-litre jerrican across the clusters.

In Isiolo County, households that use protected water pans are charged Ksh 100 per month. There was a noted increase in cost in the pastoral zones of Tana River, where a 20-litre jerrican costs Ksh 20. The highest cost of Ksh 50–100 currently, compared to the normal Ksh 10–20 per jerrican at source, was noted in the fishing livelihood zone of Lamu. The increase in cost has been attributed to an increase in borehole operational costs.

Water consumption in litres per person per day (LPPPD) remained within the normal 15–20 in a majority of the counties but significantly declined from this normal to the current 10–15 in Wajir and Mandera counties, as well as in the pastoral zones of Tana River. The least consumption was noted in Turkana and the fishing livelihood zone of Lamu at 5–10 LPPD compared to the normal 15–20 LPPD. The decline was attributed to increased distances to water sources, longer waiting times at sources, and also an increase in cost, especially in the fishing livelihood zone of Lamu.

Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement face persistent water access challenges, including long distances to water points, long queues, insufficient water points, frequent breakdowns, and quality concerns. Women and children bear the highest burden of water collection. Additionally, the waiting time in Dadaab and Kakuma was 20–35 minutes and 35–45 minutes, respectively, while waiting time in Kalobeyei ranged between 40 and 50 minutes. More than half of the households recorded water consumption at 15 LPPD.

3.8 Education

Enrollment across all education levels rose from 5,016,954 learners in Term III 2025 to 5,045,103 in Term I 2026, marking an increase of 28,149 learners. This overall growth was largely driven by higher enrolment of girls in pre-primary, primary, and senior school levels. The Agro-Pastoral Cluster registered an increase of 4,579 learners, while the Pastoral North East Cluster saw a rise of 6,022 learners, mainly due to improved transition rates, recovery from seasonal shocks, and continued community awareness efforts promoting education.

In the South Eastern Marginal Agriculture (SEMA) Cluster, patterns were uneven, with declines at the primary and junior school levels but gains at the senior school level. Despite the general upward trend, some levels and counties experienced notable reductions. Pre-primary enrolment in Tana River County fell sharply by 4,889 learners. At the primary level, Kilifi County recorded the largest drop, losing 9,141 learners, particularly girls. Junior school enrolment declined by 5,633 learners overall. At the secondary level, Laikipia County experienced the highest dropout among girls, with 3,461 leaving school, largely linked to drought-induced early marriages. These declines were mainly associated with drought conditions, irregular school feeding programmes, water scarcity, long travel distances to schools, and household migration.

School meal programmes supported **2,651,615** learners in pre-primary, public primary, and junior schools, as well as **300,772** learners in public secondary schools; however, **2,092,716** learners across all levels still lacked access to any school meal programme. Major gaps were reported in Mandera, Turkana, Samburu, Kilifi, and Marsabit counties, where large numbers of learners were either not covered or experienced delays in food distribution. In many counties, available food supplies lasted only two to four weeks per term, which was insufficient to sustain attendance. Limited access to meals contributed to reduced enrolment, irregular attendance, and low learner concentration, particularly among households facing food insecurity

Water shortages and recurring seasonal shocks continued to interfere with learning in several counties. Many schools operated without dependable water sources, including **70 primary schools in Wajir and 120 schools in Garissa that relied on untreated trucked water**. In coastal areas, 63 schools in Lamu, 172 in Kwale, and 118 in Taita Taveta lacked access to safe water, while more than 95 percent of schools in Kilifi faced water scarcity. In Turkana, limited water supplies led to reduced learning hours, and extreme heat affected learner concentration. Meanwhile, strong winds in Samburu destroyed classrooms,

Sanitation and hygiene conditions continued to be inadequate in several counties, with broken or unusable latrines, limited sanitary supplies, and inadequate menstrual hygiene support negatively affecting girls' attendance and engagement in school. Although some counties implemented health initiatives such as deworming, vitamin supplementation, and the distribution of dignity kits, these efforts were often inconsistent or insufficient to meet demand. In Meru County, the lack of dignity kits was linked to higher absenteeism among girls, particularly at the junior and senior school levels.

Multiple cross-cutting shocks, including drought, flash floods, and human–wildlife conflict, continued to disrupt education across several counties. In Laikipia County, these challenges led to temporary displacement, disrupted attendance, and loss of instructional time. In Kitui County, seasonal shocks damaged essential teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, desks, laboratory equipment, and digital devices thereby compromising the quality of instruction.

3.9 Child Protection

Food security is strongly connected to child protection, as prolonged food shortages heighten children's vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other harmful coping practices. In food-insecure households, economic strain and limited access to essential needs have pushed families to resort to negative strategies such as child labour, early marriage, and family separation. Inadequate access to nutritious food weakens children's wellbeing and resilience, further increasing protection risks. A comparative analysis of the previous and current short rains assessment yielded the following outcomes:

Teen pregnancy declined by nearly 78%, likely reflecting the impact of strengthened intervention programmes and/or improved reporting mechanisms. In contrast, reported cases of physical abuse rose by 90%, suggesting an increase in violence against children, potentially linked to caregiver mental distress and neglect. Family separation decreased by 15%, indicating relatively limited disruption; however, it remained the largest single category of child protection concern in 2025. Meanwhile, cases of sexual abuse and child marriage increased by an average of 15%, largely driven by persistent cultural and systemic challenges. Despite the progress recorded in reducing teenage pregnancy and family separation, child protection concerns continue to pose significant challenges.

The Coastal Marginal Agriculture cluster recorded a 100% surge in cases of neglect and psychological wellbeing concerns, pointing to heightened mental distress among both caregivers and children. The Pastoral North West cluster experienced a significant 72% increase in family separation, largely driven by migration in search of pasture and alternative livelihoods. In contrast, the Agro-Pastoral cluster saw a 20% reduction in caseloads, attributed to strengthened interventions. The South Eastern Marginal Agriculture (SEMA) cluster registered a sharp 65% decline, particularly in mental wellbeing concerns and teenage pregnancy, reflecting improved family stability and food security. Meanwhile, the Pastoral North East cluster remained relatively stable, with only a slight decrease in reported cases.

Although reductions were noted in teenage pregnancies and family separation, overall child protection concerns increased in 2025, with reported cases rising to 21,411 from 19,436 in 2024. Significant increases in physical abuse, sexual exploitation, and marginalization were closely associated with household instability, largely driven by declining purchasing power among caregivers, which contributed to neglect and psychological distress. The observed reductions in certain categories were attributed to strengthened protective interventions, including positive parenting initiatives, comprehensive case management, and expanded community sensitization efforts.

3.10 Staple Food and Livestock Prices

In the Southeastern marginal agricultural counties, maize prices remained above the long-term average in Embu, Kitui and Makueni, counties. In Embu, a kilogram of maize retailed at KES. 70 compared to the long-term average of KES. 58, while Kitui recorded an average price of KES. 56 per Kg against the long-term average of KES. 49, reflecting a decline in household stocks and increased market reliance. Similarly, in Makueni county a Kg of maize retailed at an average price of KES. 59 being above the long-term average price of KES. 51 indicating sustained demand. In Meru and Tharaka Nithi counties, prices were below the long-term average supported by relatively stable supply conditions. In Meru, a Kg of maize averaged KES. 60 compared to the long-term average of KES. 52, while in Tharaka Nithi county the average price recorded was KES. 64 per Kg against the long-term average of KES. 54, reflecting adequate market availability following recent harvests. In the Coast marginal agricultural cluster, maize prices exhibited mixed variations across January 2026,

compared to the long-term averages. In Kilifi and Kwale, prices remained slightly below the long-term averages, with maize retailing at KES. 52 per Kg against the long-term average of KES. 54 in Kilifi County and KES. 49 per Kg compared to the long-term average of KES. 56 in Kwale county due to relatively stable market supply. Conversely, in Lamu

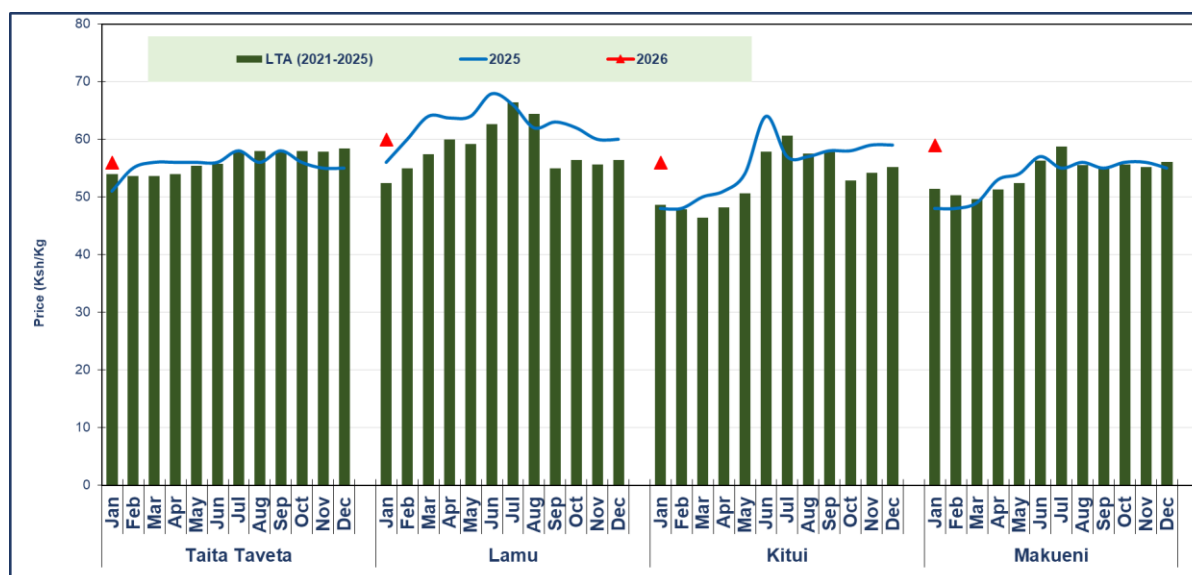


Figure 5: Retail Maize Prices in Selected Marginal Agricultural Markets

and Taita Taveta, maize prices were above the long-term averages. In Lamu county, a kilogramme of maize averaged KES. 60 compared to the long-term average of KES. 52, while in Taita Taveta the average maize price was KES. 56 against the long-term average of KES. 54, reflecting increased demand and depleted household stocks.

The average price of a medium-sized goat in the pastoral cluster was KES. 4,713 being 13 % above the long-term average of KES. 4,156. However, there were notable variations in prices across different counties ranging from the lowest of KES. 3,158 in Turkana against the long-term average of KES. 2,696 to the highest of KES. 6,393 in Marsabit county compared to the long-term average of KES. 4,707. In Isiolo, Tana River and Samburu counties, goat prices were KES. 6,200, KES. 6,000 and KES. 4,707 respectively against the long-term averages of KES. 4,340, KES. 5,222 and KES. 3,650. Mandera, Wajir and Garissa counties reported goat prices at KES. 3,400, KES. 3,600 and KES. 4,250 respectively against the long-term averages of KES. 4,757, KES. 4,340 and KES. 3,532. There was a significant decline in goat price in Mandera occasioned by very poor body condition and high prevalence of livestock diseases leading to high mortalities. In the Agro-pastoral cluster, the average price of a medium sized goat was KES. 5,823 being 26 % above the long-term average price of KES. 4,625. Variations across counties were noted ranging from KES. 4,590 to KES. 7,615. The highest price was recorded in Laikipia county at KES. 7,615 against the long-term average price of KES. 5,465 while Nyeri county recorded the lowest price for a medium sized goat at KES. 4,833 against the long-term average of KES. 3,970.

4.0 | FOOD SECURITY PROGNOSIS

4.1 Assumptions

- i. According to the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) forecast, the 2026 March to May long rains are forecast to be near average to below average in the eastern pastoral, and most of the marginal agricultural areas except along the coast where they are forecast to be below average. The forecast is associated with the neutral El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and neutral Indian Ocean Dipole conditions expected to persist through June 2026. The Northwestern Pastoral areas of Turkana and Samburu are likely to receive near average to above average long rains.
- ii. While the long rains are expected to support gradual improvements in pasture and browse, overall availability in the eastern pastoral areas is expected to remain below average, due to the extensive biomass depletion during the consecutive below average seasons in 2025.
- iii. Household incomes are expected to remain below average. In the marginal agricultural areas, incomes will be constrained by below-average crop sales following poor short rains harvests and below-average demand for agricultural waged labor during the long rains season. In the pastoral areas, household incomes will be limited by reduced livestock sales due to below average herd sizes.
- iv. Crop production in the marginal agricultural areas is expected to be near average to below average constrained by limited access to seeds and other agricultural inputs, which is likely to reduce area planted, alongside forecast mixed long rains performance, which may hinder crop development.
- v. With household food stocks in the marginal agricultural areas expected to be significantly below average, households' reliance on market food purchases is expected to remain atypically high. However, access to food will be constrained by below-average household incomes.
- vi. Staple food prices are likely to remain average to above average levels driven by an atypically high demand and constrained domestic supply following below-average production in the marginal agricultural areas, which typically contribute to national availability. Cross-border imports from Uganda and Tanzania will partially mitigate price increases through June, ahead of supplies from the long rains' harvests.
- vii. Livestock prices are expected to be average to above average driven by reduced market supply as households are expected to limit livestock sales during the long rains season to rebuild herd sizes and improve body conditions.

4.2 Food Security Prognosis (April – June 2026)

4.2.1 Pastoral Areas

While the onset of the long rains is expected to initiate pasture and browse regeneration, overall improvements are likely to remain limited due to the severe biomass depletion resulting from successive poor seasons. At the same time, livestock birth rates are likely

to remain atypically low following poor conception rates during the last successive below average seasons, maintaining below average herd sizes. In addition, the likely below average recharge of open water sources and continued above-average livestock trekking distances to grazing and water are expected to constrain livestock body conditions and productivity. Consequently, household milk consumption and income from milk sales are expected to remain below average. Although livestock body conditions are likely to be below average, sale values are expected to remain at average to above-average levels, but sales will be limited by atypically low herd sizes and desire to rebuild herd sizes, further limiting household income. With staple food prices projected to remain at average to above average, household purchasing power and access to food will remain constrained. As a result, food consumption gaps are expected to continue widening, with households expected to deepen their reliance on negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies to mitigate these gaps. The prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under five-years is expected to remain elevated ranging from Serious (GAM WHZ 10-14.9%) to Critical (GAM WHZ 15-29.9%), driven by extended periods of low food intake, and sustained poor dietary diversity, coupled by a likely increase in disease morbidity during the long rains. Overall, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will persist in most pastoral areas. However, in Mandera, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected as the severity of acute food insecurity is expected to worsen as household income sources and food access narrow significantly following successive below-average seasons that have substantially eroded household resilience.

4.2.2 Marginal Agricultural Areas

Household income from crop sale – a key income source for poor households - is expected to be below average to significantly below average following the below-average to significantly-below average short rains production. The expected average demand for agricultural waged labor in the agro-pastoral and the southeastern marginal agricultural areas during land preparation, planting and weeding for the long rains production will partially mitigate income gaps among poor households. However, in the coastal marginal agricultural areas, agricultural labor demand is likely to be below average as the typical late start of the season will be compounded by the forecast below average rains, which are likely to limit crop production. Overall, the limited incomes are likely to constrain access to seeds and other essential inputs among the poor households during the long rains. With household food stocks expected to remain atypically low following the poor short rains production and lack of carryover stocks from the previous long rains production, household dependency on market purchases is expected to remain atypically high. However, elevated staple food prices, coupled with limited incomes, will constrain household purchasing capacities and access to food. Consequently, the persistently low incomes and constrained access to food will gradually widen food consumption gaps which households are likely to partially mitigate through negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies. The

prevalence of acute malnutrition is expected to remain at Acceptable (GAM WHZ <5%) in Kilifi and Lamu, and Alert (GAM WHZ 5-9.9%) in the rest of the marginal agricultural areas except in West Pokot and Baringo (Tiaty) where the prevalence is expected to be Serious (GAM WHZ 10-14.9%) and Critical (WHZ 15-29.9%) respectively. While Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes will prevail in most areas, the protracted food and income deficits will drive Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes in Kitui, Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, Makueni and Meru North.

5.0 | OPTIONS FOR RESPONSE

Based on the situational analysis, proposed response interventions across sectors to address current and emerging challenges are summarized in Table 2. The total estimated cost for these interventions is KES 57.31 billion, covering nine sectors: Safety Net (humanitarian food assistance), Livestock, Water, Health and Nutrition, Agriculture, Education, Child Protection, Coordination, and Peace and Security.

Table 2: Recommended Response Interventions - February to July 2026

Sector	Response interventions	Cost	
		KES (Billion)	USD (Million)
Safety Net	- Provision of in-kind food to vulnerable households. - Cash transfers to food-insecure households.	30.18	233.95
Livestock	- Support for livestock insurance schemes and value chains. - Disease surveillance, parasite control, deworming, treatment, vector management, and vaccination. - Emergency water trucking for livestock and Rehabilitation of livestock water infrastructure. - Feed supplementation. - Establishment of feed reserves and fodder storage systems. - Commercial livestock off-take programme and Slaughter destocking. - Promotion of pasture establishment, conservation, and utilization including reseedling, mechanization, and training. - Rehabilitation of rangelands and invasive species control.	3.43	26.56
Water	Desilting water pans to enhance storage	5.54	42.95

	capacity. • Promotion of rainwater harvesting through training and provision of infrastructure. • Provision of fuel subsidies to strategic boreholes for continuous water access. • Provision of water treatment chemicals to ensure safe drinking water. • Servicing, maintenance, rehabilitation, and expansion of water infrastructure (boreholes, pipelines, water pans, and dam auxiliary facilities). • Solarization of water infrastructure to enhance climate resilience. • Water trucking services to critical facilities, including communities, schools, and healthcare centers.		
Health & Nutrition	• Procurement of integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) commodities • Heightened Nutrition surveillance, situation monitoring and coordination. • Nutrition response planning and resource mobilization. • hotspot mapping and prioritization of outreach sites • Scale up of integrated health and nutrition outreaches and mass screening. • Invest in Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) strategies to improve infant & young child feeding (IYCF), maternal nutrition & WASH practices • Initiate and Scale up community based approaches to address poor dietary intake among children 6 to 23 months • Sustain disease Surveillance and response to outbreaks • Advocate for counties to finance data and surveillance activities to allow for comprehensive nutrition situation analysis. • Implement of multisectoral responses and interventions to address immediate needs with complementary actions to build resilience of communities.	9.98	77.5

Agriculture	• Capacity building for adoption of soil and water conservation technologies. • Provide targeted support to farmers through the distribution of drought-tolerant seeds, fertilizers, and appropriate agrochemicals. • Capacity enhancement for climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. • Crop pest and disease surveillance and management. • Rehabilitation and expansion of irrigation schemes and infrastructure. • Enhanced access to farm inputs and mechanization. • Post-harvest management and value addition. • Enhance crop insurance coverage and accessibility for farmers • Strengthen market supply and distribution of maize to deficit areas to improve availability and stabilize prices.	2.59	20.08
Education	• Maintain and expand the School Meals Programme. • • Rehabilitate and drill boreholes to improve water access in schools. • Access to education and support for learners (intensify enrolment campaigns, more teachers). • Construct food storage facilities to improve school access to commodities. • Construct and repair classrooms. • Provide school fees bursaries to support vulnerable learners. • Provide water tanks and promote rainwater harvesting in schools. • Support boarding primary schools to improve education access. • Support school WASH programmes (construct toilets, provide dignity kits and sanitary pads).	5.45	54.50
Child Protection	• Multisectoral responses that integrate child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, education and social assistance	0.06	0.47

	and strengthening of National child helpline 116. • Training and capacity building of key stakeholders on child protection at county levels. • Coordination, supervision & delivery of services by State Department of Children Services & Partners. • Nutrition through Health and Cash Education (NICHE). • Case management and legal redress (child justice) for children in need of care and protection and in conflict with the law. • Provision of cash transfer programme for orphans (CT-OVC) and empowerment of vulnerable families. • Strengthen alternative family care such as adoption, foster care, Khafalah, adoption and guardianship.		
Peace and Security	• Implement peace-building initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts related to resource use • Monitor potential conflict hotspots and support affected communities in recovery and rebuilding efforts.	0.03	0.23
Drought Response Coordination	• Coordination meetings (CSGs/SCSGs). • Logistics and transport arrangements. • Monitoring and evaluation of interventions.	0.05	0.39
TOTAL		57.31	456.63