Nearly three decades of political instability in Somalia have resulted in widespread insecurity, contributing to the internal displacement of an estimated 2.6 million people and leaving many Somalis highly vulnerable to climatic, economic, and security changes. Somalia is also prone to natural hazards, particularly drought and flood, which have led to recurrent food and nutrition crises.

SITUATION

- Heavy rains in southern Somalia and adjacent areas of Ethiopia during the October-to-December deyr rainy season caused riverine flooding in the Juba and Shabelle basins and flash floods, affecting more than 570,000 people, according to the UN. Somalis displaced by flooding or affected by crop and livestock damage require continued humanitarian and livelihoods support, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) and the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU).

- In some pastoral areas of central and northern Somalia, Crisis (IPC 3) food security outcomes are ongoing due to the impact of consecutive seasons of poor rainfall on livestock assets. Many of Somalia’s internally displaced persons and poor households in urban areas also face Crisis levels of food insecurity. FEWS NET and FSNAU anticipate food security will improve in many areas through June 2020, primarily due to the availability of local harvests and the positive impact of recent rainfall on pasture conditions, water resources, and improved herd body conditions and size.

- Somalia is facing the worst desert locust outbreak in 25 years. The UN reports that locusts have damaged approximately 70,000 hectares of land, with Somaliland, Puntland, and Galmudug among the worst-affected areas. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization warns that the outbreak, if uncontrolled, could reduce crop production and threaten food security in 2020.

- High levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition are expected to persist in 2020, according to the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Somalia. Elevated food insecurity is linked to the 2019 gu season harvest, which was 68 percent below Somalia’s long-term average. Meanwhile, 178,000 children younger than five years of age are at risk of experiencing severe acute malnutrition in 2020.

*The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a standardized tool that aims to classify the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries, ranges from Minimal (IPC 1) to Famine (IPC 5).

RESPONSE

- USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (FFP) provided approximately $303.7 million in emergency assistance in Fiscal Year 2019 to support food and nutrition needs in Somalia. FFP support enabled the UN World Food Program and other relief organizations to provide assistance to food-insecure people in Somalia, primarily through cash transfers for food and U.S. in-kind food aid. FEWS NET and FSNAU analysis indicates that sustained food assistance from FFP and other donors is preventing worse food security outcomes in many areas of the country.

- FFP provides funding to treat and prevent acute malnutrition in Somalia. Between January and August 2019, nutrition actors treated approximately 386,000 Somali children with severe acute malnutrition.

Photo Above: A woman holds a WFP SCOPE card, which enables her to purchase food items from approved retailers.