



Food Security
Assessment Unit

NUTRITION UPDATE



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations
May 2002

GEDO

As the crisis in Gedo Region continues to develop, humanitarian organisations have intensified coordination efforts in an attempt to ensure delivery of basic services to Somali people on both sides of the Kenya / Somalia border. Insecurity is now the greatest threat to the lives and welfare of the population who are highly dependant on external assistance. The delivery of this assistance is now in jeopardy due to the serious insecurity manifested not only by fighting, displacement, injury and death but also by the mining of all major roads in Northern Gedo, the area most in need of food aid. Selective feeding programmes (one of the remaining safety nets) and health services in Northern Gedo have either ceased completely or have been severely disrupted in a population already existing in a weakened and vulnerable situation.¹ All evidence points towards a situation where malnutrition and child mortality levels, already probably the highest in the region, are escalating with each passing day.

Population movement within the region and into bordering areas of Kenya has intensified again – most recent estimates place the number at between fifteen and twenty thousand people from Belet Hawa, Somalia into Mandera town and surrounding settlements in Kenya in the past few weeks. This movement towards Mandera in Kenya has occurred at a time when nutrition surveys in Mandera District also show extremely high malnutrition rates (see details on page 3).

Most recent updates on this situation indicate the possible establishment of 'transit camps' for Somali refugees in Mandera, Kenya. It is hoped that this will enable vital services to be delivered to the newly arrived refugees while at the same time, facilitating their early return to Somalia when the insecurity subsides.

Also in this issue of 'Nutrition Update';

<i>Sahil Region Nutrition Survey</i>	Page 2
<i>Nutrition Surveys in Kenya Border Areas</i>	Page 3
<i>Rapid Assessment in Bari Region, Puntland</i>	Page 4
<i>Nutrition Surveys in IDP Camps in Ethiopian Border Areas</i>	Page 6
<i>Information on recent publications and upcoming workshop</i>	Page 6

NUTRITION SURVEYS IN SOMALIA

Dates		Area	Organisations	Status May 15 th 2002
March 27-31	Puntland	Galgayo	UNICEF	Awaiting report
April 6	South	Burkhaba-Bay	World Vision	Data entry in progress
April 6	South	Waaqid-Bakool	World Vision	Data entry in progress
April 24 – May 10	Somaliland	Sahil	FSAU/MOHL/UNICEF	Preliminary results available
May 4 – 13	South	Berdaale-Bay	IMC/FSAU/UNICEF	Data collection complete
May 12 – 18	Somaliland	Sanaag	UNICEF/MOHL/FSAU	Data collection in progress
May 11- 24 ^t	Somaliland	Haud of Hargeisa	FSAU/MOHL/UNICEF	Survey in progress
May 19	South	Beletweyne-Hiran	UNICEF/IMC/FSAU/SRCS	Final planning stage
May 25	Puntland	Bosasso IDP Camps	UNICEF/MOSA/FSAU	Pending confirmation
June	Somaliland	Hargeisa Resettlement areas	UNICEF/MOHL/FSAU	
June	Somaliland	Sool	UNICEF/MOHL/FSAU	
July	Puntland	Alulla and Iskushuban	UNICEF/MOSA/FSAU	
August.	South	Rabdure-Bakool	UNICEF/IMC/FSAU	
November	Puntland	Galdogob	UNICEF/MOSA/FSAU	
Oct – Dec.	South	All regions(Anaemia/VAD)	UNICEF	
To be planned	Somaliland	All regions (IDD)	UNICEF	

¹ ACF reports an increase in the number of admissions to the therapeutic feeding centre in Luuq, while supplementary feeding as well as water and sanitation projects have been suspended.

SAHIL REGION NUTRITION SURVEY: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

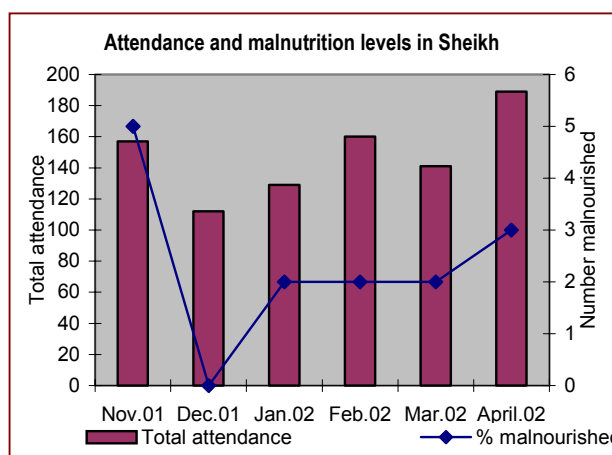
Between 25th April and 5th May 2002, Ministry of Health and Labour (MOHL), FSAU and UNICEF conducted a nutrition survey, funded by FSAU. The survey aimed to determine the nutritional status of children aged 6-59 months or measuring 65-110 cm and to identify significant influencing factors. A total of 906 children were surveyed using a two-stage random cluster sampling methodology. Weight-for-Height indicator was used to determine the nutritional status. Other information collected during the survey included the prevalence of common child illnesses, the immunisation status of children as well as contextual information for use in developing an understanding of the factors influencing nutritional outcomes.

Sahil is the youngest and smallest region in Somaliland and has five districts, namely Berbera, Sheikh, Mandera, Bulahar and Hagal Districts. Berbera and Sheikh are the most populated districts, together hosting at least half of the region's population. Berbera is the capital of the region and main port of Somaliland and provides an important source of livelihood in the region in areas ranging from livestock sales to portering. The important food economy groups in the region are the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. The pastoralists keep herds of sheep, goats and camels and the agro-pastoralists grow cash crops (fruits and vegetables) in the cool mountainous lowlands for sale in urban markets. Some fishing activities also exist. Majority (79%) of population depend on purchases of food items, an observation supported by a proportionally high percentage (62%) of people depending on either businesses or casual work as a source income.

Since the imposition of the 'livestock ban'² in 2000, the economic livelihoods of the population have been greatly eroded. The drought experienced since 2001, has also significantly affected the productivity of animals. Populations in the coastal belt to east of Berbera have been the most affected due to heavy dependence on livestock. Towards the end of Jillaal, the local authorities also raised concerns on the food security of some groups in the mountainous areas like Suuqsade and Ximan. However, at the time of survey most people initially highlighted as vulnerable in the coastal belt had moved to either the mountainous areas in pursuit of pasture and water or the main towns of the region in pursuit of better economic opportunities. The normal seasonal movement of the coastal population to escape the current adverse hot windy monsoon weather conditions had also begun. It is worth noting that the survey was conducted at the onset of *gu* rains.

Preliminary results of this nutrition survey show a *moderately* high global malnutrition rate of 11.8% as indicated in the table below. A low level of stunting (weight/age) at 13.2% (CI 11.1-15.7%) in the survey and low level of acute malnutrition among children at Sheikh MCH also indicate generally moderate to low levels of malnutrition. With exception of Acute Respiratory Infections, the prevalence of common child illnesses was relatively low. Immunisation levels have been very high and a significant proportion of the population have access to latrines.

This level of malnutrition appears to be consistent with a population which has had a long period of relatively stable food security with the exception of the coastal populations, but which has recently experienced both the effects of the 'livestock ban' and a period of drought. Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the main factors contributing to malnutrition in the area are related to deterioration in food security related to the recent drought and the livestock ban, in an environment where some child care practices are less than optimal (exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life was reported at a paltry 6.5%). Disease incidence appeared to be a less significant factor than it has been in other recent surveys.



	Proportion	No.
Total malnutrition (W/H<-2 z score + oedema)	11.8% (C.I.9.8-14.1)	107
Severe malnutrition (W/H<-3 z score + oedema)	2.0% (C.I.1.2-3.2)	18
Children with acute respiratory infection in past two weeks	27.5%	249
Children with diarrhoea in past two weeks	15.7%	142
Malaria in the past two weeks	6.0%	54
Measles cases in the past two weeks	10.3%	93
Vitamin A supplementation in past 6 months	82.8%	750
Measles immunisation	75.3%	677
OPV coverage in April 2002	85.1%	769
Received at least three doses of OPV in last one year	70%	634
Received at least one of the OPV doses in the last one year	90.1%	881

Further analysis in Somaliland will be undertaken prior to the development of conclusions and recommendations.

² The term 'livestock ban' refers to the ban on importation of Somali livestock by a number of Gulf countries.

NUTRITION SURVEYS IN KENYA BORDER AREAS

In March 2002, three international organisations operating in North Eastern Province in Kenya carried out nutrition surveys in Mandera District. As Mandera District shares a substantial border area with Gedo Region in Somalia, the results have been of particular interest to the humanitarian community operating in Somalia. The results not only contribute to our understanding of causes of malnutrition but they also enable us to understand the precarious status of the Kenyan population which is now being joined by thousands of refugees from Gedo as a result of the recent insecurity.

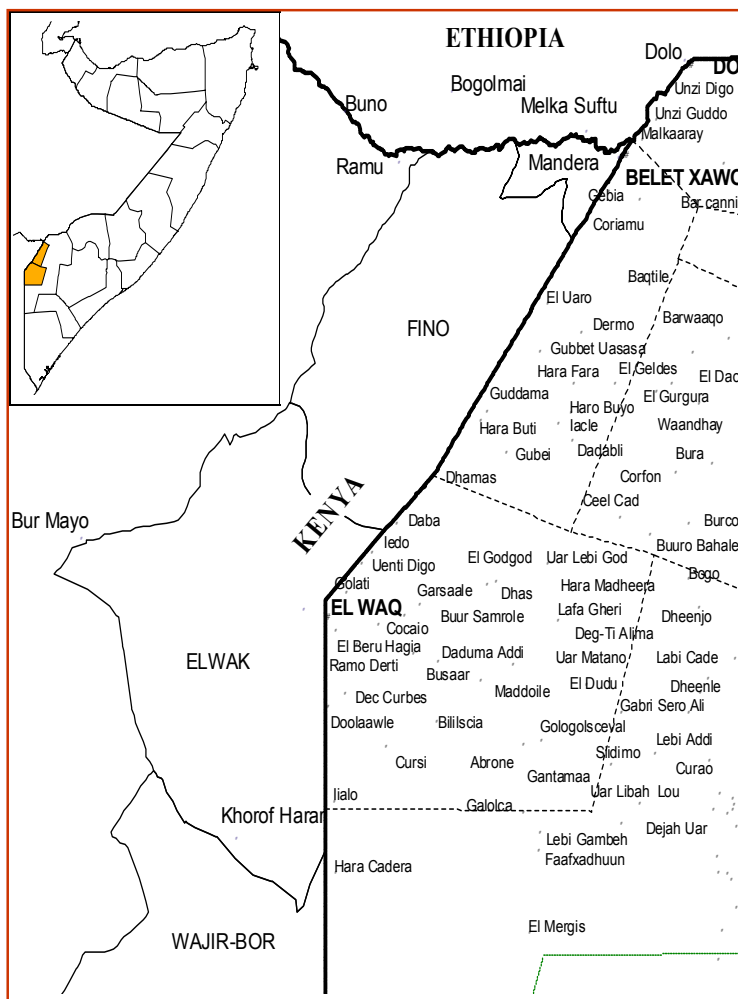
The surveys were conducted using two stage random cluster sampling. Selection of households within the clusters was adapted to suit either trading centres or grazing areas. The three organisations, Action Against Hunger, MSF Spain and Oxfam Quebec carried out a total of four surveys, the details of which are presented in the table below.

Nutrition surveys in Mandera District, Kenya. March 2002

Area	Organisation	Sample size	Global Acute Malnutrition (<-2 Z scores and oedema)	Severe Acute Malnutrition (<-3 Z scores and or oedema)
Mandera Central (incl. Mandera town)	MSF-Spain	950	26.7%	4.7%
Mandera East (Belet Hawa District border area, incl. Fino division)	OXFAM Quebec	906	33.3% (95% CI: 29-38%)	5.3% (95% CI: 3.5-7.9%)
South Mandera (El Wak border area)	AAH	922	22.2% (95% CI: 18.5-26.5%)	1.4 (95% CI: 0.6-3.1%)
Mandera West	OXFAM Quebec	895	22% (95% CI: 18.2-26.3%)	1.6% (95% CI: 0.7-3.4%)

Analysis of these surveys indicates that ‘the primary factor affecting global malnutrition within the district of Mandera is low food intake rather than a significant disease burden’. The current socio-economic situation facing the population in Mandera is described as ‘chronic poverty, compounded by successive environmental pressures, primarily drought’. Many households in the District exist in a state of high vulnerability with small fluctuations in the household economy resulting in significant changes to nutritional status. Current disease burdens, dominated by diarrhoea, malaria and acute respiratory infections also represent a major contributory factor in high levels of malnutrition. The reports highlight the need to address food insecurity for the entire population and note the probable ineffectiveness of continuing with selective feeding programmes in the absence of a basic level of food security in the population.

This is the population that is currently hosting 10 to 15,000 refugees from Somalia. Although the refugees have experienced hospitality on the Kenyan side both at official and household level, the additional hardship caused by the influx is compromising the welfare and nutritional status of both refugees and Kenyan residents. By mid May 2002, discussions on the management of the situation have evolved around such issues as relief food for Kenyan and Somali populations and possible relocation of the Somali refugees to a site where services could be more effectively delivered by UNHCR and other concerned organisations.



RAPID ASSESSMENTS IN BARI REGION, PUNTLAND

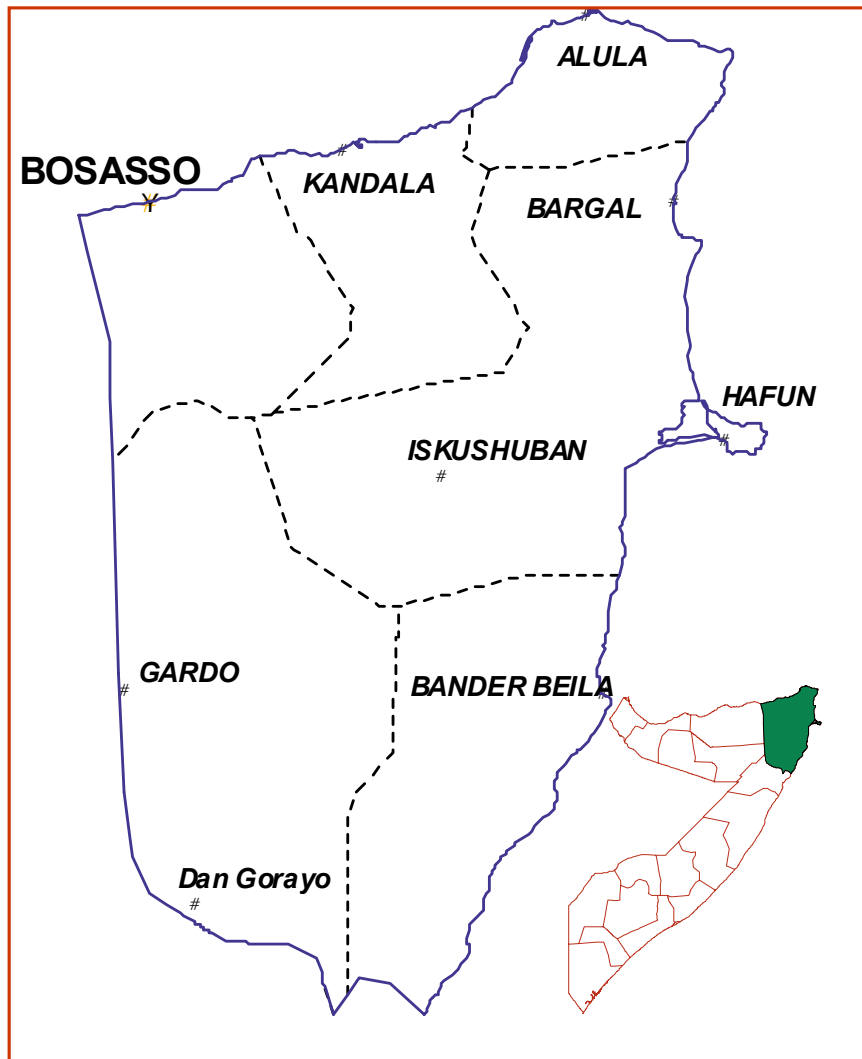
Although the vulnerability of Bari Region has been highlighted in previous Nutrition Updates, limited access to Puntland in recent months has hampered the collection or verification of nutrition data from most areas. Between 18th and 22nd April 2002, FSAU and Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) undertook a rapid assessment in five districts of the region namely Bander Beila, Iskushuban, Gardo, Kandala and Bossasso. Alula district was not included. Rapid nutritional status assessments were undertaken using MUAC³ which were interpreted using all available information on food security and health.

In the recent *Jilaal* season, some parts of the region like Kakaar-Dharoor zone experienced severe water shortage with consequent high water prices, reduced pasture availability and outward movement of livestock from the area. Most *Berkads* (main water source) in the districts of Iskushuban, Bossasso, Kandala Alula and East of Gardo were dry by the last deyr season and the Hays rains did not replenish the underground water. With the onset of Gu rains in late March/ early April, pasture is now improving and most of the livestock has returned. Run off water from Sanaag has benefited the dominant pastoral community in Dharoor plains with increased water availability.

Despite that, no improvement in milk production has yet been seen in most areas with a litre of milk costing Ssh7000 (by mid April) up from the normal price of about Ssh3000 in Dharoor valley of Iskushuban District. In Bossasso town one litre of milk currently costs Ssh 10,000 compared to Ssh 8,000 during the same period last year.

Diversity of income sources in Bari includes livestock keeping, frankincense, fishing, collection of palm leaves and weaving. Despite diverse opportunities, the very poor in both the rural and the urban areas still experience food security challenges. In Gardo, bush product collection is one of the main coping strategies while in Bossaso, search for casual labour, begging and engagement in petty business is a common practice for the poor and IDPs. Recently, labour rates have dropped and opportunities are scarce, affecting the urban poor and those without livestock.

In preparation for the assessment, eight health personnel were trained on MUAC assessment procedures and they carried out the data collection in the five districts. Priority in selection of villages was given to those considered to be most vulnerable and accessible during the time available. In Bossasso town, areas inhabited by IDPs and urban poor were prioritised. Outside Bossasso, all children aged 6-59 months in the village were assessed. Measurements were taken to the nearest 0.1cm.



³ Measurement of Mid Upper Arm Circumference

RAPID ASSESSMENTS IN BARI REGION, PUNTLAND (contd.)
MUAC screening results for Bari Region⁴

District	No. of villages	Oedema	<11.0 Severe	>=11.0/ <12.5 Acute malnutrition	>=12.5/<13.5 At risk of malnutrition	>=13.5 Normal	Total
Bander Beyla	3	0	2 (0.6%)	76 (22%)	60 (17%)	212 (61%)	350(100%)
Ishkushban	7	8 ⁵ (1.5%)	14 (3%)	70 (13%)	88 (17%)	345 (66%)	525 (100%)
Gardo	6	0	3 (0.7%)	32 (7%)	80 (18%)	318 (73%)	433 (100%)
Kandala	3	8 ⁶ (3%)	2 (0.8%)	22 (8%)	43 (16%)	185 (71%)	260 (100%)
Bossaso	9	6 ⁷ (1%)	3 (0.5%)	127 (23%)	108 (19%)	311 (56%)	555 (100%)
Total		22(1%)	24 (1%)	327 (15%)	379 (18%)	1371 (65%)	2123 (100%)

A total of 2123 children aged 6 – 59 months were screened in the five districts. About 17% of these children were either severely or moderately malnourished or would have been considered eligible for a supplementary feeding programme. The proportion of malnourished children in each district varied considerably with Bander Beyla, Ishkushban and Bossaso reflecting highest proportions and the situation in Gardo and Kandala appearing slightly better. As only 'vulnerable' villages and settlements were assessed, the figures cannot be used to make statements about the population in general. It is obvious however, that in these vulnerable areas, significant numbers of children are present who would benefit from targeted assistance. The area most obviously in need of targeted assistance is Bossaso town.

Bander Beyla: The district experienced water shortage during the recently ended Jilaal season leading to poor quality of water consumed at the household level. The district hosted some livestock from other areas and milk prices dropped to Ssh3000 per litre. Most of the Bander Bayla District lies in Coastal and Sool ecological zones. Fishing activities have been taking place, thus enabling some households to earn their income through the business and labour opportunities. However, malaria, ARI and diarrhoea continue to affect the population and may in part account for the high malnutrition in the district.

Bossaso: Significant proportion of the Bossasso District's population lives in the urban areas and is involved in business activities. However the high number of IDPs in Bossasso town and its environs as well the urban poor struggle to meet their daily needs. They are engaged in casual labour such as portering, house help activities, garbage collection and begging. The IDPs are constantly evicted by original owners of plots they have settled on and consequently incur high expenditure on their resettlement. The haphazard settlements have negative implications since little consideration on the environment is made resulting in poor sanitation and increased risk to diseases. On 13th April, Bossasso town received heavy showers, a most unusual occurrence in the area. Measles cases were reported in Bossasso town at the time of the assessment and a serious cholera outbreak hit Bossasso town in the week of 14th to 21st April 2002.

Ishkushuban: In Ishkushuban, the livestock that had moved out of the Dharoor zone during the deyr and jilaal seasons have returned with the onset of Gu rains. However the milk prices are still very high (about Ssh7000 per litre) as the livestock have not fully recovered. Water availability has improved. By mid April, the Reebiyada triangle (area between Dharjale, Timirshe and Ishkushban town), which is a high potential grazing area, had not received rains. The villages of Hiriro and Dharjaale had severe water shortage in the past few seasons. In those areas that experienced water shortage much income was diverted to water purchases. Fishing and frankincense activities have continued as normal. Some of the common diseases affecting the population include malaria, ARI and diarrhoea while sporadic cases of measles have also been reported in the Ishkushuban villages of Taager, Meeladayn, Fool'aar, Barmadoobe, Iskorsaar and Hurdia. Access to health services is poor.

Gardo: The main livestock species here are camels and shoats and these can survive with the little water available. With the start of the Gu rains, the water situation is slowly improving. There are currently three boreholes functioning in Gardo.

Kandala: Frankincense and fishing are the main economic activities in Kandala District as relatively few livestock are kept. The *berkads* and the shallow wells had some water which was being used for both livestock and domestic purposes in the past seasons. Relatively low malnutrition rate were recorded in the three villages assessed. Cases of measles in Ballidhin village were reported during the assessment.

Reduced availability of and access to water has been a critical issue in Bari Region. During the recent crisis, international organisations undertook water trucking to ninety seven locations in the region while the onset of the Gu rains has further improved water availability. International organisations have also been involved in the repair and maintenance of boreholes. In March 2002, WFP carried out food distribution to 3960 needy households from 40 villages with each family receiving 50kg maize, 4.6kg oil, and about 8kg beans. Additional distributions were undertaken in April. Limited health services coverage exist in the surveyed districts.

⁴ Village level results are also available at FSAU.

⁵ Not verified by the assessment coordinator.

⁶ Not verified by the assessment coordinator.

⁷ More cases of oedema were reported but only six were verified by the assessment co-ordinator.

RAPID ASSESSMENTS IN BARI REGION, PUNTLAND (contd.)

In general, the rapid assessments indicate a population whose nutritional status could generally be considered moderate but with particular populations likely to be in significantly worse condition. In Bander Beyla and Iskushban, the population appeared to have coped less effectively with the recent water related food insecurity. The situation of the urban poor and IDPs in Bossasso town appears significantly worse and suggests that these groups are struggling to meet their basic needs in the harsh economic environment of Bossasso town. Access to health services seems to be poor in both urban and rural areas with severely malnourished children detected in Bossasso town possibly having difficulty in accessing the appropriate services. In Bari, diverse means of accessing food and essential commodities as well as existing potential for migration allow households to cope with a significant stress. It is obvious however, that some populations are already in poor condition and further steps need to be taken to identify and acknowledge these groups and target them for specific interventions.

NUTRITION SURVEYS IN IDP CAMPS IN ETHIOPIA (SOMALILAND BORDER AREA)

In February and March 2002, nutrition surveys have been undertaken in two Ethiopian IDP camps near the Somalia – Ethiopia border. The surveys in Fafan and Hartisheikh camps indicated high rates of acute malnutrition which has been largely attributed to the inadequate distribution of general rations to the populations in the camps. Survey results are summarised in the table below.

IDP Camp	Organisation	Date	Sampling methodology	Sample size	Global Acute Malnutrition <-2 Z scores and or oedema	Severe Acute Malnutrition <-3 Z scores and or oedema
Fafan	UNICEF	Feb. 02	Systematic random sampling	384	28.4% (95% CI 23.9-33.3%)	3.4% (95% CI 1.4-7.4%)
Hartisheikh	UNICEF	March 02	Exhaustive	402	26.6%	2.2%

WORKSHOPS

ITANA 2002-05-16

Information Technology in the Advancement of Nutrition in Africa. The way forward for Africa. Pan-African Conference, 21-25 July 2002. Nairobi.

For more information visit www.itana2002.org

WEBSITES

This 'Nutrition Update', along with other relevant materials, is available on:

ReliefWeb.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/Rwb.nsf/vLCE/Somalia?OpenDocument&StartKey=Somalia&Expandview>

The UN Somalia website has been revamped and although many sections need to be updated, some useful information and past reports are available. See http://unsomalia.org/FSAU/nutrition_updates.htm

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- ❑ **Monthly Food Security Report for Somalia**, FSAU.
- ❑ **Focus. Deyr Crop Assessment in Southern Somalia. 2001/2002.** FSAU
- ❑ **Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) Early Warning Bulletin.** Contact gbulletin@fews.net
- ❑ **Greater Horn of Africa Food Security Update. 'The Return of El Nino? Early Warning Opportunities and Cautions.** FEWS NET, CARE. April 22, 2002.



Physical address: Peponi Plaza, (Block C), Peponi Road, Westlands, Nairobi.

Postal address: PO Box 1230, Village Market, Nairobi

Telephone: +254-2-741299, 745734, 748297. Fax: 740598

General email: fsauinfo@fsau.or.ke

Comments and information related to nutrition: Noreen.Prendiville@fsau.or.ke