MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES

PRESS RELEASE ON THE CURRENT NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY SITUATION OCTOBER, 2017

Overview

The Ministry prioritizes the monthly monitoring of the national food and nutrition security situation. Since the long rains begun in March, 2017 two rapid food situation and crop performance assessments have been done. The latest assessment was done in August/September covering the High and Medium Rainfall areas (HMRA)) which constitute the main food producing areas.

1. The assessments are particularly aimed at evaluating the performance of rains and its impact on agriculture and consequently food security. This is part of early warning information and projection of the National Food and Nutrition Security Outlook. 2017 Assessments have been particularly key in examining the recovery from the prolonged drought, monitoring the impacts of shocks particularly the Fall Army worm invasion and checking on food market and price trends.

2. From the current season's assessments and reports from counties, the 2017 long rains season is almost coming to an end with a record of near normal performance in the high and medium rainfall areas. This has resulted to near normal food production in most parts of the country thereby boosting and further stabilizing overall food security. During the season, **745MT** of Assorted Drought Recovery and Early Maturing Seed was distributed by government to counties. These crops, provided the needed early harvest and food relief from mid-June when harvesting begun.

3. Harvesting of the long rains crops started in earnest from July, but in some parts of Western and the North Rift, the harvesting is expected to commence from mid-October with peak harvest in

November/December. The improved food supplies from ongoing harvests have translated to improved stocks of major staples at various levels and especially at households. The national food security situation outlook for the remaining part of the year is therefore expected to be on a continuous positive improvement trend.

4. However, drought and food security situation remains critical in the Arid & Semi Arid Areas (ASALS) as rains were highly depressed and erratic. The most affected counties include: Wajir, Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Tana River, Garissa, Mandera, Baringo, some parts of Kitui and Kajiado. Poor recovery phase is attributable to continued drought leading to high temperatures, water, food and feed scarcity. The number of people affected by food insecurity has risen to about 3.5 million, with majority being found in the ASALs areas.

Performance of 2017 long rains

5. Though the 2017 long rains were late in onset and with erratic tendency, a near normal performance was recorded in the high and medium rainfall areas. It is projected that **37.9 million bags** will be realized from both the long and short rains in 2017. This represents a decline of **4.4 %** of the long term average (LTA) of **40 million bags** and a slight increase from the **36.9 million** bags realized in 2016. The decline in overall production was attributed to reduction in area under maize by **5.1%,** late rainfall onset coupled with long dry spells mid-season and Fall Army Worm invasion.

The expected harvests from North Rift will move to replenish and further boost the needed stocks beginning from mid-October through to December, 2017 and also ease any anticipated shortages.

6. The production of beans and Irish potatoes also declined by **29 %** and by **17%** respectively compared the long term average. The decline is attributed to inadequate certified seed, and poor rainfall distribution. The production of other food crops such as banana, sorghum, cowpeas, green gram and root crops also recorded a slight drop.

7. Despite noted production decline for most food staples, the improved food supplies from ongoing harvests has translated to improved stocks of major staples. As at **30th September, 2017** national stocks stood at **7,672,015 bags**, with Millers and traders holding about **1,000,000 bags** and NCPB **1,000,000** bags. The expected harvest from the North Rift between October and December is projected to yield **14 million bags**. The current stocks and projected harvest will therefore be sufficient to meet national demands up to the end of the year, and from the maize balance sheet a surplus of **10.3 million** bags, will be carried over to 2018.

8. Stocks of other food commodities such as rice, wheat, beans, green grams, sorghum, vegetable and fruits are fairly adequate as harvesting has been ongoing since July/August thereby boosting national local supplies.

Food commodity price trends

9. Prices of common food staples have generally come down, presently low and stable especially for maize, beans, potatoes, fresh vegetables and fruits.

10. Maize farm gate prices are as low as **Ksh. 2,200** as reported in Kitale**.**

11. The price of beans is stable at an average of **Ksh 6,990** with Nakuru selling at a lowest price of **Ksh 5,140** and a maximum of **Kshs 8,910** in Eldoret. The average price of Irish potatoes remains low and stable at **Ksh. 1,750** per 110 kg bag. This is due to the peak harvesting in some of the potato growing areas. In major markets, prices of vegetables are relatively low and stable but prices of the off season fruits have increased marginally.

12. The maize flour prices have remained at the set subsidized price of **Ksh. 90** for the 2Kg packet and **Ksh. 47** for the 1Kg packets. Prices of food commodities are expected to decrease as supplies improve in various regions.

Strategic Food Reserve

13. The Government has committed to purchase all maize offered by farmers from the 2017 crop. The Ministry and Tegemeo Institute has conducted field technical surveys to determine the prevailing cost of maize production in the major maize growing regions of the Rift Valley and Western.

After critical analysis and harmonization of the cost of production reports from the two institutions, the cost of production of a 90kg bag was determined to be **Ksh.2,257.**

14. SFR Board Recommendation

Based on the cost of production and in consideration of the farmers' mark up of 35% (Kshs.790 per bag), the SFR Board has recommended the produce price for a 90kg bag of maize be Ksh.3,000.

15. Current Intervention

However, owing to the adverse weather conditions coupled with other numerous challenges such as outbreak of Fall Armyworm that our farmers faced during the period, the Government having evaluated the situation, has provided a rebate of Ksh.200 per 90kg bag of maize offered to NCPB, over and above the SFR Board recommended price.

Consequently, I wish to therefore announce that the purchase price of a 90kg bag of maize to NCPB will be Ksh.3,200 with effect from Monday 16th October, 2017.