

Greater Horn Outlook

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FEEDING THE GREATER HORN OF EASTERN AFRICA: DRIVERS OF REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

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FEEDING THE GREATER HORN OF EASTERN AFRICA: DRIVERS OF REGIONAL FOOD (IN)SECURITY

EDITORIAL

The Greater Horn of Eastern Africa region has 32.2 million people who require food aid in 2010. Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda are expected to have the largest number of food insecure populations. What are the underlying drivers for this?

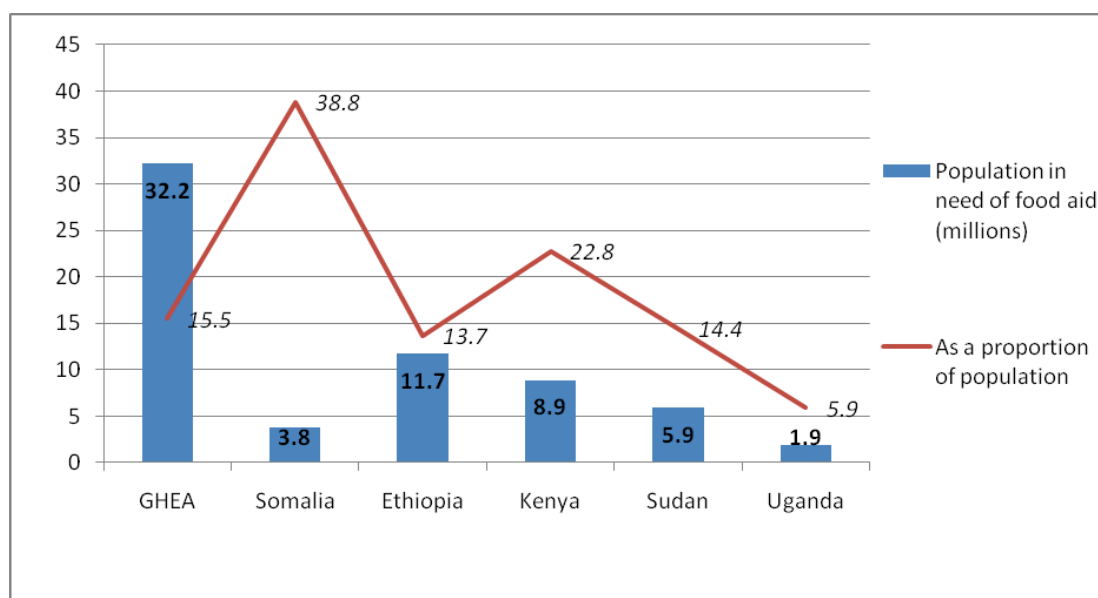


Figure 1: Greater Horn of Africa population in need of food aid. Source - Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (quoted in *The East African* weekly newspaper - see below)

This March 2010 edition of Great Horn Outlook is titled **“Feeding the Greater Horn of East Africa: Drivers of Regional Food Security.”** Based on the observation that growing food insecurity is a reality in the region, this Outlook highlights the apparent drivers of food insecurity and explores why food emergencies in conflict zones have lasted for decades (Part I), summarises the region’s food security outlook in 2010 (Part II), takes a closer look at the accelerating African land rush (Part III) and concludes with a Last Word on guinea pigs and genetically modified maize.

Mystified? Read on!

PART I - HEADLINES ON FOOD SECURITY CATEGORIZED BY DRIVERS.

Driver I - 'Short-term' Current Weather Conditions

New warning on food security for East Africa

<http://bit.ly/9YHHmP>

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) has raised a red flag over the worsening food security situation in the Horn of Africa. "Large parts of the Horn of Africa have had less than 75 percent of normal rainfall this year, having already endured a series of severe droughts. The population can no longer cope with such extreme and protracted hardship, which often comes on top of conflict situation. As a result, more than 16 million people desperately need help"

Food security critical in East Africa, Action Aid

<http://bit.ly/bD9pxZ>

Despite much needed rains the situation for many people in East Africa remains critical after one of the most severe droughts for a generation.

Major Food Crisis in East Africa - Warnings Of Food Insecurity in Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti

<http://bit.ly/Uf8J5>

Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti are facing a major food crisis after continued drought and increased food prices.

Prolonged drought drives surge in forced marriages

<http://bit.ly/cXzplm>

The end of Kenya's prolonged drought has set off an age-old but illegal tradition: Maasai families are marrying their teenage girls to older men in exchange for cattle to restock their drought-decimated herds.

KENYA: Hungry and HIV-positive in Nairobi's slums

<http://bit.ly/aaiFMW>

Violet Tinah, 40, a resident of Korogocho slum in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, is living with HIV and was recently diagnosed with tuberculosis, but her biggest problem today is not disease - but hunger. "Often I go without food and during such times I feel dizzy and nauseous after swallowing the [TB and HIV] drugs" the formerly prosperous carpenter added. "Putting food on the table is like a dream."

Inflation to rise sharply in Tanzania due to fall in crop production

<http://bit.ly/bel2Cn>

Tanzania forecasts low food production — far from previous projections — following crop destruction by heavy rains in 18 regions early this year. Tanzania was in the 2008/2009 season expected to harvest 11.5 million metric tonnes of maize which would be an increase by 600,000 tonnes, from 10.9 million metric tonnes in the 2008/09 fiscal year. But late rains have diminished all hopes of reaching the target.

Food Crisis Looms in the Region in Spite of Current Season of Bumper Harvest

<http://bit.ly/9FM6oi>

The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Kenya, Castro Camarada, recently told a conference in Nairobi that over the past three years, there has been an unprecedented series of crises that have worsened the food situation. Also, prolonged drought and governance issues have greatly affected the food situation, not only in Kenya but also regionally and globally. Ratemo Michieka of the University of Nairobi's Faculty of Agriculture says Kenya is the second highest importer of food in sub-Saharan Africa, after Ethiopia.

Driver II - Climate Change

Food security in East Africa 'within reach'

<http://bit.ly/doBiwk>

East Africa will face both crop gains and losses as a result of climate change, but food security is an achievable goal if new farming technologies are embraced, says a study.

Livestock may do better than crops, African farmers told

<http://bit.ly/9KKlsy>

The stresses of climate-induced crop failures could be avoided if more small farmers in Africa also raised livestock, say researchers. *(See the Last Word on a story about guinea pigs in DR Congo - Editor)*

Adapting to climate change: Agricultural system and household impacts in East Africa

<http://bit.ly/aQX8hn>

The East African region exhibits considerable climatic and topographic variability. Much spatial and temporal variation in the response of different crops to climate change can thus be anticipated. The study simulated yield response in two crops that are widely grown in the region, maize and beans, and investigated how the impacts of climate change might be addressed at two levels: the agricultural system and the household. Regionally, there are substantial between-country and within-system differences in maize and bean production responses projected to 2050.

Together, region will end hunger

<http://bit.ly/d7Vztk>

Nairobi hosted three high-level meetings in February 2010 to discuss food security in the eastern Africa region. As at last December (2009), the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, a team of UN agencies and other international humanitarian organisations, estimated that 32.2 million people — 11.7 in Ethiopia, 8.9 million in Kenya, 5.9 million in Sudan, 3.8 million in Somalia and 1.9 million in Uganda — need food aid *(see chart in the editorial above)*.

While erratic weather conditions due to the effects of climate change have impacted negatively on food output, the region's governments have done precious little to harness whatever is produced to ensure the citizens have access to, and can afford, food. Food insecurity slows down the rate of economic development, and if eastern Africa is to progress, it has to be made secure. Therefore, a joint regional effort must be made to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

African Development Bank (AfDB) in ambitious plan to boost farming in Africa

<http://bit.ly/codJeQ>

The AfDB is expected to enhance the continent's food security and reduce poverty levels while promoting conservation of natural resources through its 2010-14 Agricultural Sector Strategy.

Driver III – The Rush for Africa's Land?

Ethiopia: Looking for land in a hungry country

<http://bit.ly/c80KDe>

Ethiopia, where hunger regularly stalks almost eight million people is attracting investors looking to start mechanized plantation. The story reported that the country's ministry of agriculture has tagged more than seven million acres as virgin land and plans to lease half of it, very soon, to foreign investors for just 50 cents an acre per year. This is part of a trend now sweeping the globe. In May 2009, the Economist reported that in the last

three years foreigners had secured deals or engaged in talks on between 15 million and 20 million hectares of farmland in developing countries.

How food and water are driving a 21st-century African land grab

<http://bit.ly/a9cS0b>

An Observer investigation reveals how rich countries faced by a global food shortage now farm an area double the size of the UK to guarantee food supplies for their citizens

Driver IV - Conflict

Why have food emergencies in conflict areas lasted so long? When emergencies last for decades

Source: *How to improve food security in protracted crises, Economic and Social Perspectives, policy brief paper 7, February 2010, FAO.*

The report states:

“Unlike emergencies following natural catastrophes, protracted crises are often the result of failed institutions and conflicts over resources. They are characterized by poor or non-existent public services, high susceptibility to violence, and the absence of regulation in the productive and trade sectors. As countries become less able to protect their citizens, widespread hunger is a common consequence”.

It finds faults in relief agencies as they focus on immediate intervention and pay little attention to their sustainability. It recommends the following in order to deal with protracted crises:

1. Short-term relief programmes need to be coupled with measures to address the underlying causes of food insecurity
2. Interventions must build on local institutions and livelihood adaptation strategies to achieve more sustainable solutions
3. The current aid architecture needs to be more flexible and support longer-term interventions and development approaches, even during acute crisis situations
4. A balance needs be achieved between short and long-term intervention.

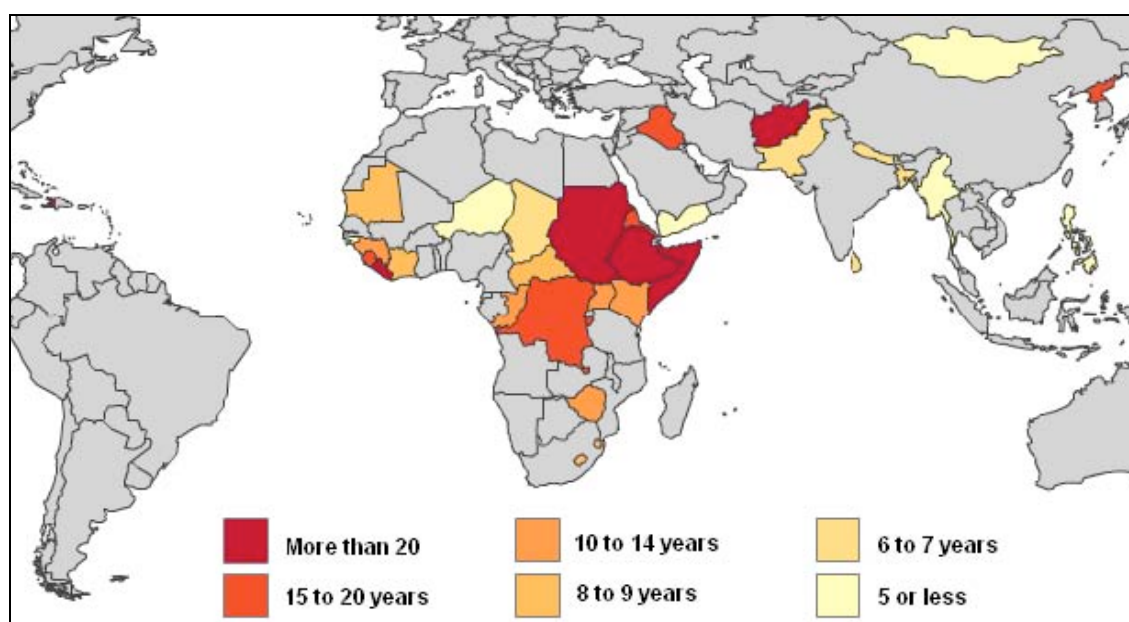


Figure 2: Map of the duration of food emergency crises around the world

PART II - GHEA COUNTRIES' FOOD SECURITY OUTLOOK AS AT FEBRUARY 2010

Source: Famine Early Warning System - <http://www.fews.net/Pages/default.aspx>

Djibouti

The food security situation is expected to be critical in the coming months and no significant improvement is expected until at least June 2010. The pastoralists have not yet recovered fully from the impact of the 2008 droughts hence food security is of significant concern in most pastoral areas primarily due to the lack of water in water catchments, diminishing water tables, and very weak animal body conditions, as well as signs of acute malnutrition and poor dietary diversity. Livestock mortality has been reported in all districts and initial estimates are around 50-70 percent.

The other key populations affected by food security are the urban poor population. High levels of food insecurity will persist in the coming months for urban poor households due to high staple food prices (above the five-year average), the high unemployment rate, and the limited availability of casual labor opportunities. Malnutrition in poor urban areas is of significant concern.

Ethiopia

According to the Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' Humanitarian Requirement Document, released on 2 February 2010, an estimated 5.23 million people will require emergency food assistance through December 2010 estimated to cost around USD 231.3 million. Key populations affected by food insecurity are people living along the riverbanks of major rivers of the country and the pastoral populations in the Afar and Somali region. These areas are the epicenters of recent recurrent droughts.

Kenya

The 2009/10 short rains ended in mid-January, resulting in improved household food security prospects for drought-affected pastoralists and marginal agricultural farmers. A favorable national short rains harvest is anticipated. However, while maize prices are declining in some harvesting epicenters, the price of the staple remains up to 100 percent above average levels, to the detriment of net buyers such as pastoralists and urban consumers.

Key populations affected by food insecurity are pastoralists (north, northeast, northwest, and the south), Destitute pastoralists who have dropped out of the pastoral economy after losing livestock to droughts, floods, and conflict, agro pastoralists in the south and west, marginal agricultural households in the coastal and southeastern lowlands, marginal agricultural/fishing households situated around the lakeshore and Urban poor in all major towns. The most critical period of greatest vulnerability will be between August-November 2010.

Somalia

The 2009/10 seasonal assessment confirms that a widespread humanitarian crisis still persists in Somalia, with 42% (estimated 3.2 million people) in need of emergency humanitarian assistance and/or livelihood support until June 2010. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) continue to be the largest single population group in crisis, representing 43% of the total 3.2 million, and with the ongoing conflict in the country this number is likely to continue to remain high and even increase further. The key populations affected by food insecurity are the rural populations, drought and flood affected pastoral and agropastoralist, IDPs and destitute population groups in camps and urban centers.

Sudan

Food security conditions were expected to deteriorate between February-March in the Eastern and Western Flood Plains due to food stocks depletion earlier than normal. Conditions in eastern parts of Jonglei and Upper Nile states, Northern Bahr El Gazal, and

northern parts of Warrap are expected to deteriorate further during April–June when an earlier than normal peak hunger season is anticipated to begin in many more areas. Food insecurity in these areas will continue until harvest in July and September 2010. Any extension of the 2009 elevated conflict levels and cattle raiding into the dry season (up to the end of April) could severely affect land preparations for the 2010 growing season, especially in Jonglei, the Warrap-Unity States border, and Lakes where conflict is ongoing.

Key populations affected by food insecurity in southern Sudan have been agro-pastoralists. These includes populations that have been returning from northern Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic following the January 2005 peace deal with the Khartoum government, as well as those that face chronic food security problems associated with the hunger season.

Tanzania

Food security at the national level continues to be generally satisfactory, although there are some isolated pockets of food insecurity in areas (northern and northeastern pastoral areas and parts of the central zone) that experienced drought conditions during the 2008/2009 agricultural season. Traders' stocks and harvests of non-cereals continue to supply major markets across the country. Although all markets are adequately supplied with food across the country, staple food prices have remained above the five-year average, constraining the ability of poor households to buy food. The increased food crop prices are attributed to high transportation costs and diminishing household food stocks. Cereal prices are expected to start declining when the harvest peaks in March for early-planted crops.

Key populations affected by food insecurity are small farmers' households in central regions and other localized marginal rainfall areas, pastoralists with small herds who lost their stock in the 2006 drought and the 2007 Rift Valley Fever outbreak, small farmers and fishing households situated around lakes shores and rivers basins, marginal men and women households depending on coast fisheries, cassava farmers households affected by Cassava Mosaic Disease, poor casual laborers in rural areas depending on agricultural and livestock labour opportunities, urban poor in all town centers and low-income HIV/AIDS affected households across the country.

Uganda

Nearly 1.4 million people are currently food insecure in Uganda, including at least 900,000 highly food insecure people in Karamoja, or nearly 80 percent of its population. The decline in food security in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of Karamoja over the last several months is likely to be tempered by improvements in livestock productivity as livestock body conditions remain good due to pasture and water availability. However, food stocks in southern agriculture areas in Karamoja have run out as the hunger season is expected to start in March, nearly two months earlier than normal.

Sporadic rains received in January have moderated seasonal dry conditions in most areas. These rains have ensured the continued availability of pasture and water for livestock in most areas of the country and adequate crop growth conditions for perennial crops. The above normal second season harvest in most bimodal areas has increased market supplies, resulting in declines in food prices. Some traders in the central regions are holding on to stocks in anticipation of better prices in the second quarter of the year when demand increases due to low household food stocks. Key populations facing food insecurities are IDPs and returning IDPs in Northern Uganda, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in northeastern Uganda.

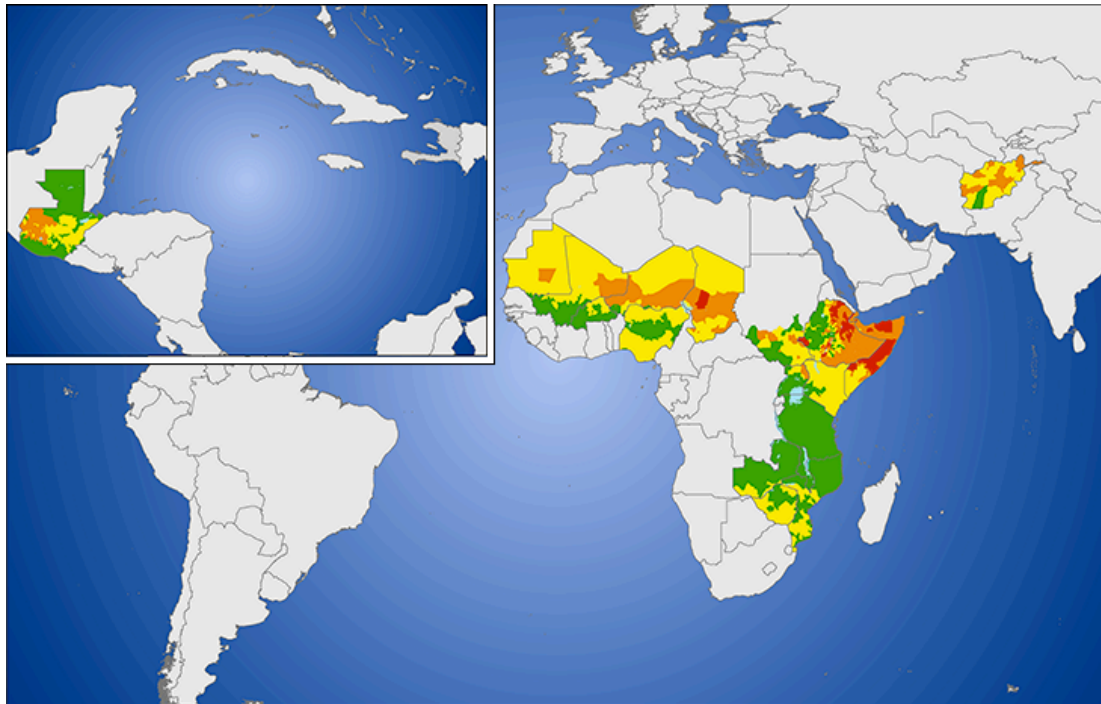


Figure 3: Food security outlook, second quarter 2010

Most of the GHEA region is expected to be food secure or moderately food insecure (green and yellow) in 2010 with critical areas being at the tip of the Horn of Africa (maroon and red)

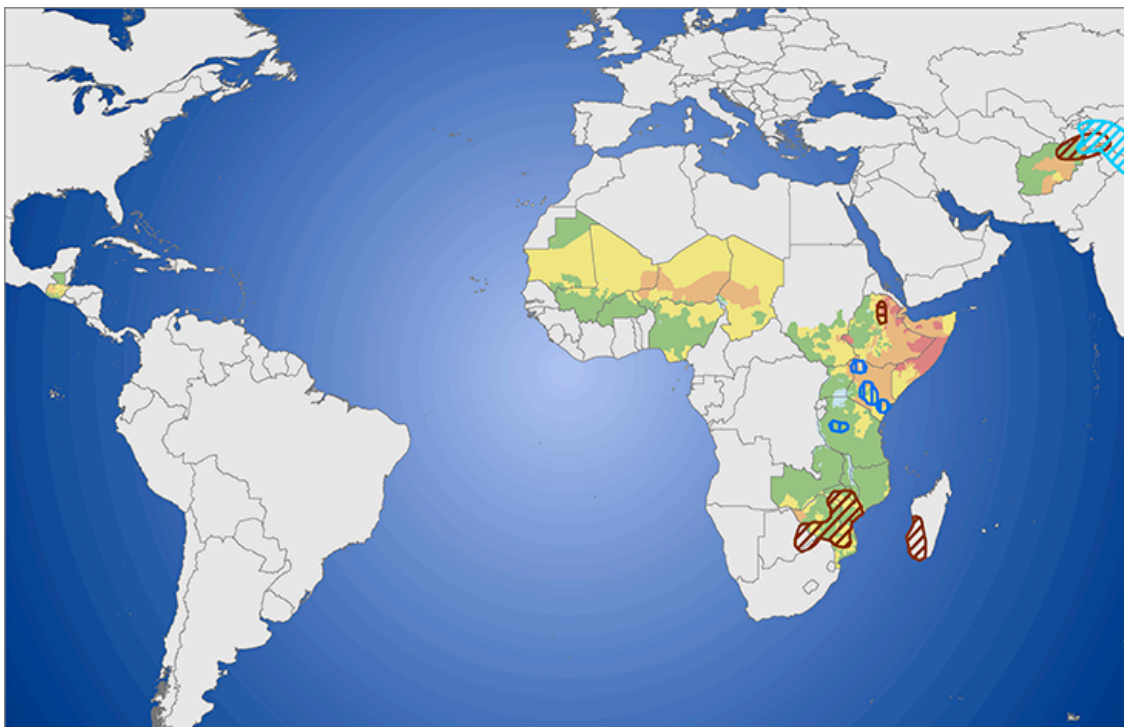


Figure 4: Weather hazards outlook, 2010

Tanzania and Uganda are expected to have agriculturally favourable conditions (green) with short-term dryness expected in Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti and drought in Somalia.

PART III - FOOD SECURITY DRIVER IN FOCUS: THE GREAT AFRICAN LAND RUSH

There have been reports that one of the responses by rich western, Arab and Asian countries to the 2007/08 surge in global food prices (along with other commodities) has been to seek and secure large areas of arable land in Africa. While the jury is still out on the exact impact of this emerging phenomenon in terms of food security for Africa, the GHEA Observer reviews two recent reports on the issue.

The Guardian (United Kingdom) in an article termed this as **‘Ethiopia: Looking for land in a hungry country’¹** claiming that rich nations are eyeing up land in some of the world’s poorest countries in order to feed their own populations. The article goes on to observe that if this sounds like good news for local economies (African) how can people in places like Ethiopia be sure they’re getting a fair deal? The Guardian notes that Ethiopia is one of the hungriest countries in the world with more than 13 million people needing food aid. Paradoxically, however, the government is offering at least three million hectares of its most fertile land to rich countries and some of the world’s most wealthy individuals to export food for their own populations. Ethiopia has approved 815 foreign-financed agricultural projects since 2007. Any land that investors have not bought is being leased for an annual fee of approximately \$1.00 per hectare. The article reports that in many areas the deals have led to evictions, civil unrest and complaints of “land grabbing”.

The article further reveals how rich countries faced by a global food shortage now farm an area double the size of the UK to guarantee food supplies for their citizens. This is said to be happening in 20 African countries inclusive of Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi, Ethiopia, Congo, Zambia, Uganda, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Mali, Sierra Leone and Ghana amongst others.

The Guardian report attributes the rush to have been triggered by the worldwide food shortages following the sharp oil price rises in 2008, growing water shortages and the European Union’s insistence that 10% of all transport fuel must come from plant-based biofuels by 2015. It asserts that the rush is the biggest since the colonial era and is led by international agribusinesses, investment banks, hedge funds, commodity traders, sovereign wealth funds as well as pension funds, foundations and individuals from European Union Countries, China and India attracted by some of the world’s cheapest land. The report asserts that it is not known if the acquisitions will improve or worsen food security in Africa, or whether they may stimulate separatist conflicts. While accepting the ‘land rush’ as the new reality an Oxfam report² suggests that food and water shortages are the key drivers for the rush. It advises that while such a rush can boost the economy it is important to make sure that the deals are fair to all parties involved.

¹ <http://bit.ly/c8OKDe>

² <http://bit.ly/a9cS0b>

THE LAST WORD!

Guinea pigs in drive to improve food security in DRC

<http://bit.ly/bkCCpD>



Guinea pigs are being studied as a viable solution to food insecurity issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Small and easy to conceal, guinea pigs are well suited to the DRC's conflict zones, where extreme poverty and widespread lawlessness means that the looting of larger domestic livestock is commonplace.

The animals are also a relatively low-cost investment and reproduce quickly, with females capable of producing up to five litters per year, a total of 10-15 offspring. They also suffer from fewer diseases than pigs, chickens and rabbits, and in the event of disease outbreaks, their high reproduction rate means populations have a much shorter recovery time.

"We're not sure exactly how guinea pigs got to DRC," said CIAT forage scientist Brigitte Maass, "but they have enormous potential to improve rural livelihoods there."

Kenya protests block GM maize shipment in Mombasa GM maize

<http://bit.ly/akPhmE>

A shipment of genetically modified (GM) maize has been blocked at the Kenyan port of Mombasa after protests by environmentalists. Protestors claimed that safety checks had not been carried out on the maize and that it could contaminate the soil. Many African countries are under increasing pressure to grow GM crops to tackle hunger and malnutrition, and drought in recent years has caused food shortages in Kenya.