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News Editors,

13, 500 people in Bulambuli District facing food shortage

Bulambuli: 13, 500 people in Bulambuli District are experiencing food shortage after their crops became stunted due to a long dry spell. The affected communities are in Bunambutye (11, 000 people) and Bwikhonge (2, 500 people) Sub Counties.

The Office of the Prime Minister two weeks ago distributed 300 bags of maize and 100 bags of beans which have already been consumed. During an assessment by Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) and chairpersons of Bunambutye and Bwikhonge Sub Counties on August 11, 2011, it was discovered that the communities in the affected sub counties did not harvest any food.

Bulambuli and some other districts have been experiencing a dry spell since early May. The LC III Chairman Bwikhonge Sub County Paul Michael Kimamati during the assessments said they last received rain in April. He said communities are now eating one meal. He further noted that community members with little money are buying food from the nearby sub counties which are were not affected but at a higher price.

The worst affected parishes are Bulemera, Buwabwala, Bwekanda in Bwikhonge Sub County; Buluguya, Bumufune, Bunanganda, Buwebele, Bushangi, Bumasali in Bunambutye Sub Counties.

Some of the community members have started cutting down the stunted crops to plant cotton, hoping for a better season. The LC III Chairman Bunambutye Sub County Geoffrey Khaukha said his sub county is the most affected in the district. He added that the food from OPM was distributed but more food is still needed.

The district has started receiving some rainfall and as a result the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) has pre-positioned seeds which are to be distributed to the communities. A final assessments by URCS and the sub counties is to be conducted to identify the amount of seeds each family can be allocated.

The Red Cross and sub county teams visited acres of land with stunted maize. Some of the community members ploughed land but never planted due to the dry spell.

Alex Walubengo who was found planting cotton said, "It has been a terrible season. I planted maize on my land which is 1 acre but I have not harvested anything. The drought was too much. If we don't get enough rains, even the cotton I have planted will not grow."

URCS Secretary General Michael Richard Natakas said the Red Cross is implementing a food security and livelihood programme in Eastern and Northern Uganda which is aimed at alleviating challenges occasioned by famine.

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