



Press Release  
1 March 2017

## **Half of all citizens have experienced hunger in the past three months Citizens are generally food insecure, but the situation has recently become worse**

**1 March 2017, Dar es Salaam:** A large majority of *Sauti za Wananchi* respondents (78%) report food shortages where they live. The situation is worse in rural areas where 84% reporting food shortages compared to a still substantial 64% in urban areas.

At least half of Tanzania's households report that they worried about running out of food (69%); there was not enough food to feed all household members (51%), or a household member skipped a meal because they could not get food (50%).

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Hunger pangs: Food (in)security in Tanzania*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,800 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) between 14 and 26 September 2016 and from 1,610 respondents between 9 and 15 February 2017.

Although the data clearly show a sharp decline in terms of food security in the five months between September 2016 and February 2017, they also demonstrate how generally food insecure most citizens' lives are.

- In February 2017, **65% of citizens worried about their households not having enough to eat** in the previous seven days, compared to **45%** in September 2016.
- In February 2017, **51% of citizens reported that there was a time that there was not enough food to feed their household** in the past three months compared to September 2016 when **43%** reported that this had occurred during the previous 12 months.
- In February 2017, **35% of citizens reported that a household member had gone without eating the whole day** due to lack of food in the previous three months, compared to **21%** who reported that this had occurred in the six months before September 2016.

Part of the reason for ongoing food insecurity may well be rising prices. Bank of Tanzania data show that maize prices (actual, wholesale) have generally doubled (after adjusting for inflation during the same period) in the past two years, from TZS 400 per kilogram in early 2015 to TZS 852 in December 2016. *Sauti za Wananchi* respondents report that maize costs on average TZS 1,253 per kilogram (reported, prices in local markets).

The current shortages and ongoing food insecurity underline the context of general vulnerability and income poverty. A total of 8 out of 10 citizens (80%) report that their household does not receive enough income to cater for their daily needs. These figures vary little between groups.

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said: "*Citizens are saying that they have been hit hard by food shortages. We welcome the government's acknowledgment of this situation and encourage rapid*

*intervention to prevent a bigger crisis. However the data show that most citizens are living on the edge, vulnerable to the slightest price shocks. Strong economic growth rates year after year are of little value if we can not ensure that our citizens live less precarious lives. Guaranteeing that no Tanzanian is forced to sleep hungry must surely be at the very top of our national priorities. ”*

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**For more information:**

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**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org), or [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti)
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