

FIELD TRIP REPORT TO NEGELE (OROMIYA REGION) AND FILTU (SOMALI REGION)

(27 March - 3 April 1997)

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Summary

Following the March multi-agency mission in the South Borena zone of the Oromiya National Regional State (Region 4) and Liben zone of the Somali National Regional State (Region 5), a field trip was conducted to Negele and Filtu from 27 March to 3rd April 1997. The purpose of this trip was to monitor the progress of the rains (locally called *ganna* in Borena and *gu* in Somali), to visit the concerned government organizations and NGOs operating in the area, and to obtain information about the food and water distribution operation in the six drought affected lowland weredas in Borena and four weredas of Liben zone.

Accordingly, the EUE team held discussions with the Zonal Administrative Council of both zones, and the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Department, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Water Resource, and Save the Children-USA in Borena zone.

In general, the drought conditions were extremely serious until the last week of March. Shortages of water and pasture were reported in all of the areas visited, and heavy livestock losses were reported. The Zonal Department of Agriculture, however, reported a timely start to the *ganna* rains on the 28th of March in Negele. If the rains continue in all areas until mid-June, it will be reasonable to expect that effects of the drought will be reversed.

Assessments and DPPC Appeal

Food requirements for Borena and Somali areas were derived from the annual pastoral areas assessment conducted in December 1996 by the Zonal DPPD and the Wereda Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committees, and followed up shortly thereafter by the central DPPC, Oromiya RRB and CARE-Ethiopia Food Information System (CEFIS). At that time, first indications of impending water and pasture shortage were already visible. Conditions reportedly were similar in four weredas of Liben zone. In Borena zone, 416,310 people in eight out of twelve weredas were identified as being

highly or partially affected by shortage of water and pasture as the result of the prolonged dry season (known as *bonna* in Borena). A total of 10,870 MT of wheat grain, 273 MT of oil and 163 MT of supplementary food for Borena zone and 700 MT of wheat grain for Liben zone was requested in February 1997 by the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission. (See attached table.)

Between the months of December and March, the situation became much more serious. The Borena Zonal Administrative Council reported to the EUE mission that conditions in the eight targeted weredas had severely deteriorated by March due to poor pasture and shortage of water resulting from the absence of the short rain (*hageya*) in September - November 1996. According to the Zonal Administrative Council, due to the absence of the short rains (*deyr*) in 1996, the water levels in the boreholes were reduced and most ponds and surface water had dried up by March.

The erratic nature of the 1996 long rain and the absence of the short rain, together with the encroachment of inedible weeds into the grazing land also served to deplete pasture resources. Furthermore, the increasing livestock population was found to exceed the carrying capacity of the Borena rangeland. These factors led to high levels of livestock deaths in both zones, although exact death rates are not available. Two recent assessments (conducted by the Borena Zonal Agriculture Department and a multi-agency task force, respectively) reported rates of 0.6% and 30%, respectively. Neither of these figures appears to be reliable.

During our visit there was no animal disease outbreak reported in either zone. However, endemic diseases like foot and mouth sicknesses, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (CCPP) and trypanosomiasis around Teltele were reported.

Responses to the Situation

Based on the assessment findings, immediate measures have been taken to allocate food and deploy water tankers to the affected weredas of Borena and Liben zones. While these measures have been welcomed by local officials, they said that problems relating to the poor condition of the water tankers in both zones and the lack of budget for fuel and drivers' per diems in Liben zone have limited the effectiveness of these efforts.

The DPPC food distribution commenced in both zones in late December 1996 and will reportedly be conducted up to May or June 1997. A total of 8,398 MT of wheat grain, 174 MT oil and 26 MT of supplementary food has been delivered to Borena zone. Much of the requested food has already been transported to the weredas. Three rounds of food distribution have been made to the six lowland weredas in Borena zone. Only one round has been distributed in Shakiso and Hageremariam, as these weredas have only recently been targeted for food assistance. In Liben zone, of the 700 MT requested by the center for all weredas in the zone, only 435 MT of wheat has so far been delivered. A one time distribution was conducted in all weredas. Further distributions are not possible due to the limited amount of grain received in the zone. The Liben Zone Administrative Council had no information as to whether the balance of the required food will be made available.

In addition to the food allocation and employment of water tankers, the central DPPC provided limited amounts of fodder for livestock to the six targeted areas in Borena Zone. This is the first time in Ethiopia's history of drought response that such a measure has been taken. The forage included teff and wheat hay, although it was reported that the animals preferred the former to the latter.

In response to the critical situation in the area, CARE International has allocated an additional 150 MT of maize and deployed some water tanker trucks to the above mentioned weredas of Borena zone. The Regional DPPB, zonal line departments, and NGOs have also deployed 13 water tanker trucks and 25 short and long haul trucks to transport water and food from the weredas to the affected kebelles of the same zone.

Save the Children-USA (SC/US) has been operating in Borena zone for the last four years. Their programmes have until recently been based on relief distribution and a rehabilitation programme for Somali returnees. This rehabilitation programme included such activities as health post construction, school and clinic maintenance, road construction, and road maintenance. According to the project manager, this programme has recently been completed, however, and SC/US is now conducting a capacity building project in the zone. The components of this project include training on rangeland management for pastoralists and vocational training for traditional birth attendants and veterinary scouts, as well as family planning education and services. Furthermore, periodic training for personnel of the Departments of Agriculture and Health is also given. This programme is intended to extend for three years, from 1996 to 1998.

In response to the special appeal for assistance, SC/US has donated 15,000 litres of fuel to the Borena Zonal DPPD to be used for the current relief operation. Furthermore, the agency SC/US is soliciting funds from donors to assist the DPPD in financing additional transport costs of the operation.

The Borena Zonal Administrative Council stated its concern that due attention must be given to regular maintenance of the existing boreholes, shallow wells and ponds. However, the Council appreciated the quick response for intervention taken by the Central DPPC, Oromiya regional and zonal concerned bureaus and departments and NGOs operating in the area.

The Water, Mines and Energy Resources Department head reported that the distribution of available water points is not sufficient to serve the pastoral population. In addition to the traditional water wells it was mentioned that 80 water points were constructed by UNICEF over the past few years. From this figure, 25 are boreholes and the remaining 55 are reported to be shallow wells. However, due to lack of proper handling and minor technical problems, some have been abandoned and others need water pump or hand pump replacement. During the last two months about 60 % of these water sources have been rehabilitated and are now fully operational.

In Filtu, in addition to the DPPC food allocation, three water tanker trucks were deployed to transport water from boreholes to the villages which were critically

affected by shortage of water. From these, two tankers were assigned to Moyale area and one for Filtu area. These trucks were reported to be too old and thus are not fully operational. In addition, absence of budget for fuel and drivers' per diems were mentioned to be major problems.

The Filtu Zonal Administrative Council reported that of the eight boreholes dug by WASSA in two weredas of the zone, none are currently operational due to lack of water. During our discussion the Council suggested that there was a greater need for more ponds to be constructed than boreholes, as they are less expensive there is an absence of ground water in most of the area.

Affected Population in 8 weredas of Borena Zone and Amount of Food Allocated

Weredas	Population	Type of Food Allocated		
		Wheat(MT)	Oil (MT)	Supplementary food(MT)
Moyale	74,971	3,602	67	56
Teltele	25,799	845	27	16
Yabello	57,613	951	31	19
Dire	79,596	2,197	69	41
Arero	38,012	1,296	42	25
Liben	70,319	1,014	38	6.5
H/Mariam	50,000	695	-	-
Shakiso	20,000	270	-	-
Total	416,310	10,870	274	164

Source : - Borena Zonal DPPD