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## Potential Water Shortage in Borana and Guji

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UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM ETHIOPIA



## Response for Wabe Shebelle River Flooding Victims in Somali region

Background: flooding necessary and welcomed for recession agriculture

The current rains in Somali region, locally known as the *Gu* rains, normally start in April and last up to mid May. This year, the *Gu* rains started in mid -April 2003 on time. These rains also occur in Somalia and the North East District of Kenya. The intensity of the rains in certain localities was heavy resulting in flooding in Shinille Zone and near Togochale, a border town between Ethiopia and the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland. But what called for an emergency situation was the overflow of the Wabe Shebelle River by the end of April after flood warnings had been disseminated from UN-Gode Sub-Office on 24 April. Usually, if the flooding is not too extensive, it is a blessing for agropastoralists living along the river depending on flood recession agriculture. The last time the Wabe Shebelle River flooded was in May 2000 when parts of Kelafo and Mustahil were inundated.

The Wabe Shebelle is one of the biggest rivers in Somali Region whose tributaries originate from the upper escarpments of the Bale Mountains and West Hararghe of Oromiya and the highland parts of Somali Region. This means that both the *Gu* rains and the *Belg* rains (short rains) in the highland areas of Oromiya have contributed to the swelling of the river. The river crosses the border to southern Somalia and flows into the Indian Ocean passing through the agricultural areas of the Lower Shebelle region of Somalia. Because of heavy rainfall upstream, the river burst its banks with sudden inundation leading to loss of animal and human lives, human displacement and causing damages to crop, property and road infrastructure. The damage could have been minimized had there been a system that provides flood early warning to vulnerable populations living alongside the riverbank. Even though regional authorities have been warned of a possible flooding of the river, the

## NEWS ▶

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### Extremely Positive Response to Appeals, Although Requirements Expected to Increase

There has been a positive response to both the Joint Government-UN Appeal and the subsequent Addendum. On the non-food side, despite the response from the donor community, there are indications of increased needs in the country. ▶

### Regional Coordination Meeting Held in Jijiga

The fifth regional Coordination meeting of UN agencies, NGOs and regional bureaus of the Somali Regional State (SRS) was held in Jijiga on 27 May 2003. ▶

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early warning did not reach people directly concerned along the river, particularly upstream from Gode town, the capital of Gode Zone, and towards East and West Imi, where many people were caught by surprise.

In order to assess the flood disaster situation, a high-level government delegation from the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) and the regional government of the Somali National Regional State (SNRS) toured the affected areas at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May by helicopter. The most affected areas visited during the mission included East Imi, West Imi, Kelafo, Mustahil and Gode (see map below).

Following the government mission, the regional DPPB worked out a contingency plan for non-food items for consideration. International Organisations, UN Agencies and NGOs present in the affected areas immediately offered their assistance to the flood victims. On 12 May a first Flood Task Force Meeting was organised in Gode town comprising all concerned actors, i.e. Zonal DPPC, Zonal Health Department, Regional Health Bureau, Ministry of Defense, Bureau of Agriculture, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), UNICEF, WFP, WHO, SC-UK (Save the Children-UK), SC-US, OWDA (Ogaden Welfare Development Association), SOS-Children Village and MSF-Belgium (Médecins Sans Frontières).

#### Areas & number of people affected

In Gode, Kelafo and Mustahil woredas it has still been raining, slowing down humanitarian access to the most flood affected areas. But most recently Kelafo and also Mustahil are now accessible by road from Gode. Farmers in Kelafo town are starting to move back, but the entire remaining district is still under water (69 villages out of 144). Mustahil district is now partly accessible. 87 villages were surrounded by flood but the water is withdrawing and most localities are accessible by truck to date. In East Imi the local administration reported 13 flood-affected villages of which one has been swept away by floods. In West Imi, 9 of the 12 villages along the river have been flooded and damaged. The estimate of the total number of people affected has been reduced from over 100,000 originally to 91,000 (as of 20 May), most of who are women and children (see table below). In Kelafo 1,350 and in Mustahil 5,000 people had to leave their homes for shelter away from the flooding. Therefore, the total targeted displaced or homeless population amounts to approximately 6,350 people in the two woredas. In total around 880 residential houses have been damaged, three elementary schools and five health clinics have been destroyed and some generators for water pumps have been washed away in Kelafo. In addition, road segments and bridges connecting Gode with Kelafo and Mustahil have been severely damaged and as a result, traffic for all vehicles have been disrupted.

In its 20 May meeting the Gode Floods Emergency Task Force approved and endorsed 91,050 persons as total number of people affected by recent floods in the five woredas of Mustahil, Kelafo, East Imi and West Imi and Gode.

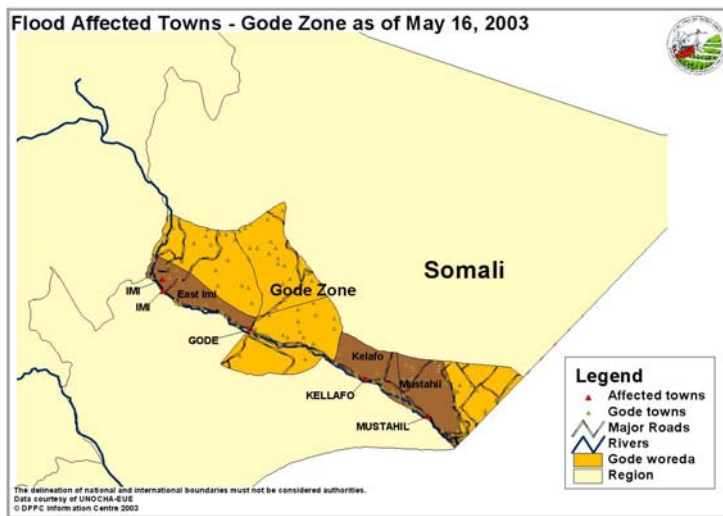


*Recent pictures of inaccessible roads in Gode Zone. In Gode, Kelafo and Mustahil woredas it has still been raining, slowing down humanitarian access to the most flood affected areas. But most recently Kelafo and also Mustahil are now accessible by road from Gode. Farmers in Kelafo town are starting to move back, but the entire remaining district is still under water (69 villages out of 144). Mustahil district is now partly accessible.*

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Woreda	Kalafo	Mustahil	East Imi	West Imi	Gode (Lab)	Total
Number of Households	5,864	7,647	2,084	2,000	615	18,210
Affected population	29,320	38,235	10,420	10,000	3075	91,050
People in need of food (% of tot pop)	70	70	100	100	70	
People in need of Non-Food Items (% of tot pop)	30	30	100	25	30	
Seeds	Maize & Sorghum	Maize & Sesame	Maize & Sorghum	Sorghum		

Currently in Kelafo and Mustahil the flooding situation has improved and people started to return to their homes resuming their normal livelihoods. People appreciated immediate humanitarian assistance received that saved their lives. However, in Mustahil people in 5 villages did not get any assistance due to accessibility problems. These villages still remain inaccessible. The flood disaster situation in Ferfer is precarious as the area has not been assessed before and there was no information on flood damage. A multi-agency team that assessed the area from 25 to 29 May noted that 18 villages were



flooded and people from about 300 households were displaced. All flooded villages are still inaccessible and there is very little information available on the real situation of the stranded people.

#### Human and livestock losses

The situation is reported to be deteriorating with a total of 64 reported flood-related deaths to date in Gode Zone, i.e. 39 in Kalafo, 7 in Mustahil and 18 in West Imi due to water-born diseases, drowning, diarrhoea, ARI, malaria and malnutrition. Risk remains high if heavy rains resume in the highlands of Oromiya Region and rains continue as currently reported in and around Gode in Somali Region.

It has been estimated that approximately 5,900 animals were killed in the localities that were flooded. The number of livestock assets lost during the flooding is higher in East and West Imi than in Mustahil and Kelafo.

#### Airlift and other transport operations

Three Hercules C-130 cargo planes were chartered by the federal DPPC to fly in high protein biscuits, shelter materials, jerry cans and household utensils on 9 and 11 May. ICRC also chartered a plane in mid-May from Nairobi, Kenya, to ship non-food items and essential drug supplies to Gode. The plane flew in three times from Nairobi. For the flood affected areas in Gode Zone an army helicopter with a loading capacity of 3 tonnes has been deployed to airlift emergency supplies that stated its operation 13 May. But due to mechanical problems it was returned to Dire Dawa for repair and maintenance.

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The federal DPPC shipped some aviation fuel to Gode with a chartered aircraft. Fuel for the helicopter has been another problem for the last week of May that has prevented further air operations to flood affected areas along the river.

The regional government has made available two motorboats with engine and technicians for the transportation of survey teams and for basic supplies to the affected population surrounded by water. These boats were extensively used to drive from Kelafo to Mustahil at the very early stage of the flooding in mid-May when road access was impossible.

Flooded areas upstream from Gode in East and West Imi remained inaccessible for quite a while. ICRC tried to reach East Imi by truck from Gode and failed. The truck got stuck for several days. A few days later ICRC assessment team succeeded to reach East Imi from the north through Fik zone from Jijiga.

Currently the water is withdrawing or has already withdrawn from flooded areas and all affected areas are now accessible by road.

#### Relief Food

The ICRC supplied 260 tonnes of one-month food rations for 20,000 flood-affected people from Dire Dawa by road. The consignment included wheat grain, pulses and edible oil. DPPC is also arranging with transport companies to transport additional food into affected areas for the drought-affected population, which includes some of the people now flood-affected. However, if all the flood-affected should be assisted with relief food, then the total monthly ration requirement would be around 1,200 tonnes. From this requirement rations should be subtracted that would have come in for former drought victims included on the annual beneficiary lists in their respective areas.

#### Health and Nutrition

There are malaria outbreaks, measles and diarrhoea cases in the flooded areas and risk of ARI and cholera is increasing. Three UNICEF emergency drug kits were sent to the area and the regional head of the malaria department has also arrived in Gode. The region has 16,000 UNICEF-supplied mosquito nets from regular programs on hand and is looking into the possibility of redirecting part of these to prevent further increase in malaria incidences. The Gode zone health bureau and UNICEF in Gode are drafting a health action response plan. The health bureau has sent a proposal to UNICEF to support operational costs for Gode health staff, the provision of five additional emergency drug kits, and 13,000 treated mosquito nets. The Italian NGO CCM (Comitato Collaborazione Medica) is supporting the zonal health bureau by providing cars to strengthen the disease surveillance systems in Gode and Kelafo. Three teams each in Kelafo and in Mustahil carry out outreach emergency health services to flood affected people.

In all affected areas local populations (and especially children) are running short of food. On 12 May UNICEF and the regional health bureau supplied additional therapeutic food (F75/F100) from Jijiga to Gode to secure the Therapeutic Feeding Centre activities. All in all, UNICEF, ICRC and the federal DPPC have so far dispatched 71.2 tonnes of high protein biscuits.

#### Water & Sanitation

ICRC is considering direct water and sanitation interventions including water purification treatment, hygiene, sanitation, cholera control and supply of ten water bladders of 10,000 litres each. Additionally, Oxfam GB is sending a team to Gode. UNICEF is discussing with the Water Bureau, ICRC and Oxfam for possible support and is sending a water and sanitation expert to Gode in the coming days. UNICEF is sending a water and sanitation expert to



*ICRC airlifted 13,200 units of shelter materials and kitchen utensils from Nairobi to Gode with two chartered aircrafts. UNICEF, ICRC and the federal DPPC have so far dispatched around 10,000 blankets, 5,300 units of plastic tarpaulins, 250 rolls of plastic tarpaulin 4x50m, 15,000 plastic jerry cans, 15 cartons of water purification kits, 10,000 plastic cups and 10,000 plastic plates, 3,000 jugs and 23,300 pieces of various utensils.*

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Gode. The zonal health bureau, ICRC, OXFAM and UNICEF are handling the water sector coordination.

#### Emergency seeds for farmers

Two trucks with 1.2 tonnes of maize, sesame and bean seeds from the regional Bureau of Agriculture (BOA) have been dispatched to Kalafo, Mustahil and Ferfer. The seeds are to be given to flood affected farmers free of charge. ICRC is also giving 20 tonnes of seeds while SC-US is offering seeds to East and West Imi to cover remaining ICRC shortfalls. The Gode Zone Agricultural Department (ZAD) prepared a proposal to provide emergency seeds in flood-affected woredas. Total cost of intervention is put at 395,038 ETB to cover costs of 144.5 tonnes of maize, sorghum and sesame seeds and the necessary farm implements.

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So far, all immediate emergency needs have been met by ICRC, UNICEF and the Government of Ethiopia with logistics and monitoring assistance from NGOs operating in the area. Additional needs may further be assessed and if necessary the Government of Ethiopia may request and appeal for additional funding or in-kind contributions from the international donor community. Currently a US \$ 50,000 OCHA emergency assistance grant is being transferred to DPPC for purchase of urgently needed relief items and operational support to assist flood victims.

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## **NEWS**

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### **Belg and Pastoral Assessments to Start 22 June**

This year's belg and pastoral area assessments will start on 22 June 2003 throughout the country. The Early Warning Working Group (EWWG) will assign logistic coordination and methodology teams with participants from the DPPC, WFP and USAID for the preparation of these assessments. The logistic team will prepare detailed team and logistic arrangements.

### **Extremely Positive Response to Appeals Although Requirements Expected to Increase**

The positive response to both the Joint Government-UN Appeal and the subsequent Addendum has provided, as of end May, food aid pledges amounting to 1.28 million tonnes (including some unconfirmed pledges) out of a requirement of 1.54 million tonnes leaving a shortfall of 16%. However there remains a substantial tonnage (over 240,000 tonnes) to be resourced for requirements beyond September. Non-food pledges total US\$65.5 million out of a requirement of US\$81.1 million leaving a shortfall of 19% or US\$15.5 million. Despite the response from the donor community, there are indications of increased needs in the country. For example, in the water sector currently beneficiary numbers have been increased from 2.7 million up to 4.2 million.

### **Regional Coordination Meeting Held in Jijiga**

The fifth regional Coordination meeting of UN agencies, NGOs and regional bureaus of the Somali Regional State (SRS) was held in

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Jijiga on 27 May 2003. The objective of the meeting was to gather and share information on humanitarian operations undertaken in the region in cooperation with all cooperating partners, review recovery and development related activities aimed at creating linkages between relief and development, identify operational constraints encountered in the field and propose solutions. A complementary objective of the meeting is to develop team spirit among partners and create the opportunity for improved networking for collaborative approach for coordination & improved delivery of assistance to beneficiaries. The meeting was attended by the Regional President; H.E. Mr. Abdireshid Dulene Rafle, H.E. Ms. Brazeal, US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Director of USAID Mission to Ethiopia and other senior embassy officials. Mr. Paul Hebert, Head of office of UN-OCHA-EUE in Ethiopia and Mr. Abibu Tamu of the UNV Programme in Ethiopia also participated. In addition to its normal agenda, the meeting discussed the flooding situation in the Wabi Shebelle river basin, the new joint UNDP and government initiative in establishing National UNV Programme in Ethiopia and its implications on capacity building of the region for improved programme delivery and the progress made in the implementation of the SC UK project on the development of early warning and food security monitoring system for the Somali region. In this connection, the need for expanding the early warning project to include flood early warning system was discussed. The need for developing the response capability of the region commensurate with requirements was also discussed. The ambassador and the Director of USAID Mission to Ethiopia appreciated efforts being made by the regional government of the Somali region in coordinating humanitarian operations in the region.

### **Potential Water Shortage in Borana and Guji**

The onset of 'ganna' long rains for this year was late by 2-3 weeks. In general, however, it could be said that the rains were good but not normal in terms of intensity and distributions. In the last decade of April heavy rains (as high as 103.6 mm/day) were received. As a result of the heavy rains many traditional water points called 'ellas', were totally inundated and filled up with silt, rocks, logs and other foreign materials that completely clogged the wells and made them useless. Furthermore, many big ponds and small dams constructed by government, NGOs and the pastoral communities bursted due to heavy rains and therefore rainwater will not be stored for the upcoming dry season. Many more ponds are still at risk and might break with the ongoing and the coming 'hagayya' short rains. Unless these local water harvesting installations are repaired, rebuilt or maintained for capturing at least rains from the coming short rainy season, water shortage will become a critical issue and a potential threat to the livelihoods of the pastoral and agropastoral communities of Yabello, Teltele and Dire woredas of Borana Zone and Liben, Wadera and Shakiso woredas of Guji Zone. The maintenance of the damaged water points requires heavy machinery to reconstruct or excavate. This is beyond the capacity of the community and calls for assistance and inputs from government, NGOs or donors to lessen the likely negative implications for the people and their animals in the coming dry season. The heavy rains also damaged field crops (maize, haricot bean and wheat) in the agropastoral areas of both zones, particularly in Liben and Yabello woredas.

*Focus on Ethiopia is produced by the United Nations Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia. For further information contact the Information Unit at [un-eue@un.org](mailto:un-eue@un.org). Tel.: 44 44 14 or 51 37 25 and visit our website: [www.uneue.org](http://www.uneue.org)*



*An example of a big pond, named Haro Bake, which broke due to the heavy rains in Yabello Woreda in Borana Zone. It will take heavy machinery to repair this pond that has been in service for the last thirty years to Yabello and three neighboring pastoral woredas.*