



25 APRIL 2002

UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM ETHIOPIA



Polio Free In 2005

A house-to-house campaign was launched to vaccinate children under the age of five against polio in Somali Region. ▶

Waiting for More than Water

A look at Somali Region



On the edge of a desolate town in the southern most tip of Somali National Regional State (SNRS/Somali Region), a group of twenty women rest on the side of the road in 35°C degree heat. Sitting on jerry cans and small buckets, they chat and wait as part of their daily routine. Someone spots an approaching cloud of dust not too far away and everyone rises as a large water tanker gets closer and closer.

This scene was observed on a recent field mission to Somali Region and, although it depicts a situation representative only in isolated parts of the region at the height of dry seasons between the short “deyr” and long “gu” rains, the reality in this particular case is that an abundant water hole was situated 15 km away. Had a solution as simple as donkeys carrying water into town for barter or sale been considered? Why was the town situated in this location and not closer to the water source? What programmes are envisioned to ensure sustainable access to potable water on a permanent basis here and elsewhere.

That scene has been replaced by a less common one: heavy rains in some parts of the region, swelling of the Wabe Shabelle to seldom seen heights, a renewed flow of perennial rivers and the filling and flooding of natural catchments in areas where six months ago concerns on deteriorating livestock conditions prompted preparations for possible deterioration of human conditions.

While the two images represent extreme views of a region often inappropriately associated with human crisis, they do suggest that something needs to change. How can we reverse the trend of cyclical need for relief assistance and focus on the development of

NEWS ▶

Major Stakeholders Meet in Tigray

Major stakeholders met in Tigray to review recovery programme progress in Tigray and Afar. ▶

East Hararghe in Need of Seeds for the *belg*

Preliminary findings indicate a shortage of seeds in areas of East Hararghe. ▶

Flood Affects Thousands

Duhti wereda was flooded in Afar Regional State. ▶

Testing to Verify Presence of RVF

FAO is building the country's capacity in terms of surveillance and diagnostic capacity for Rift Valley Fever. ▶

Support to the PRSP

The PRSP Federal Level Consultation was conducted in Addis Ababa end March 2002. ▶

Ethiopian and Eritrean UNCTs Meet in Addis Ababa

Eritrean and Ethiopian UN Country Teams met for the first time in Addis Ababa, to discuss humanitarian and development assistance to support peace building and reconciliation efforts. ▶

25 APRIL 2002

assets and capacities through recovery and longer-term programmes that address the underlying causes of poverty and thus minimize the impact of the next adverse climatic change.

Although emergency assistance saves lives, the question arises as to how significantly it changes the realities of conditions in areas where recurrent droughts, slow economic and political growth and internal conflict are common elements. In Somali Region, socio-economic indicators, utilization and enhancement of human resource capacity, capital investment and delivery of health and education services are among the absolute lowest in Ethiopia. Other regions are home to similar conditions not conducive for development, but people in Somali Region seem to regularly catch the brunt of humanitarian crises, or at least the attention that comes with the morbid attention drawn to human suffering that provokes large-scale humanitarian response.

An explanation of why this is so in Somali Region requires a historical look at the past 25 years: the external displacement of more than a million Ethiopian Somalis during the Ogaden war, the sporadic return of these refugees over the subsequent decade culminating in the mass return of refugees and the flight of hundreds of thousands of Somalis to refugee camps in Eastern Ethiopia as Somalia itself burst into flames. The cross-mandate approach (in the early 1990's the UN system shared responsibilities among agencies) adopted to deal as equitably as possible with the massive influx from Somalia of former refugees, the exodus of Somalis and the internal displacement of Ethiopian Somalis caused by a severe drought on both sides of the border and the clamor for power on the other side of the border did little to encourage investment and led to a continuation in the deterioration of basic services, isolation and misunderstanding of Somali peoples.

The drought of 1999/2000 and the human suffering it brought with it, stirred again the realization that the tragedy that happened should not happen again. Humanitarian assistance alone is not the answer. The DPPC Assistance Requirements and Implementation Strategy: 2002 states that a solution lies in multi-faceted and complementary programming that saves lives, protects livelihoods and assets and provides an environment conducive for development. The regional and federal government and their partners have made some headway towards recovery while acknowledging that the road ahead is a long one requiring flexibility and adaptability. Successful recovery, rehabilitation and development will depend on peace and stability and an enabling environment that supports longer-term solutions and the delivery of critical services in the region.

One of the challenges facing the assistance community is to provide appropriate and adequate support to Government (in support of its own programmes and investment) in strengthening Government services through capacity building in all its forms. In Somali Region, the need to improve basic infrastructure, enhance general security, ensure political stability and administration accountability coincide with the need to restore assets and enhance trade. If basic human needs are met and groundwork for development programming is laid now, the population stands a better chance of more fully recovering from the effects of the recent crisis and coping more effectively with the next one.

In the last year, the Government in the SNRS has made some progress towards identifying and meeting the requirements for long-term programmes, including a five-year development plan for the Region. On the political and administrative front, the SNRS President, H. E. Abdireshid Dulene Rufle, in a meeting with UN programme personnel explained that the Region was also



25 APRIL 2002

undergoing a serious restructuring as part of a countrywide programme devolving decision making responsibilities to wereda level. A division of labour and authority was being redefined to allow one individual to hold only one position in the Regional Government, be it executive, legislative or judicial. The President expressed his belief that the separation of powers would lead to a more responsive and accountable Regional Government. He admitted, however, that there were gaps in the capacity of the Regional Government and that certain areas in the Region needed training and capacity support.

To effectively deliver development services to those most in need, it will be necessary until regional government capacity is sufficiently strengthened, to also channel resources through recognized partners: national and international NGOs, civil society, communities and the UN. Developments of the past few years have highlighted the advantage of improved and expanded coverage and the establishment or deepening of development roots in this region. Before the 1999/2000-drought crisis, only a handful of NGOs were working in Somali Region. The latest crisis drew greater numbers of NGOs both national and international to Somali Region and although some have since left, some have joined those who remained after the previous drought crisis in 1991 - 1993 (also influenced by the concomitant political turmoil in Somalia) with a commitment to longer-term programmes while engaging in a mix of both relief and recovery initiatives that include livestock health, early warning and water rehabilitation and development initiatives. Although constraints in the Region --- limited and restrictive funding, difficult (for various reasons) access, small and wider pockets of insecurity, erratic coverage and an inefficient exchange of awareness of positive elements of existing programmes in some parts of the region with other parts of the region --- have resulted in what oft seems interminably slow progress, some headway towards meeting critical needs has been made.

The UN Country Team joins those turning to programmes with more emphasis on recovery and development in Somali Region. Following discussions in the SNRS (during the SNRS/DPPC/UN consultation in Jijiga in September 2001) and in Addis Ababa, UN involvement has seen added commitment to capacity building within regional bureaus and an expansion of activities that are more rehabilitation and recovery oriented. UN agencies with activities in the Region are also examining ways in which to better enhance collaboration, and the complementarity of their respective programmes.

As part of a post-emergency programme in Ethiopia as a whole and in Somali Region in particular, relief assistance will need to be continued for groups of individuals who have fallen into destitution while the strengthening of coping mechanisms and the possible diversification of livelihoods are examined more closely. Added importance is being placed on improved early warning systems and response preparedness in an environment susceptible to recurrent droughts. By necessity, the programmes are becoming multi-dimensional and a more effective and concerted effort from all stakeholders, each contributing the expertise and resources that it has to what all hope is (or will become) a coherent government recovery and development strategy.

As the success of any post-emergency recovery or rehabilitation depends on the collaboration of all stakeholders, the contributions of all have to be taken into account --- and should be counted on. In the current assistance environment in Ethiopia, the UN agencies, NGOs and donors look to Government not just for leadership and coordination but for contributions (material, human resource, planning and financial) to which their own contributions can be

As the success of any post-emergency recovery or rehabilitation depends on the collaboration of all stakeholders, the contributions of all have to be taken into account --- and should be counted on.

25 APRIL 2002

complementary. Although the timing of contributions and the transformation of pledges into the delivery of needed assistance are open to scrutiny, the reality is that contributions to Ethiopia were appreciable for the 1999 – 2001 crisis. The fact that the crisis reached the proportions that it did and should have been better anticipated and managed, has led all stakeholders to seek change in the way that many of us have dealt with emergency situations in Ethiopia since the mid-80's: Feed the hungry; shelter the homeless; inoculate the young. We always knew how temporary such a response in a people so susceptible to climate and living in a fragile political and economic environment would be; could it be that when the next drought hits --- as it almost inevitable will --- everyone will be more prepared to ensure that the impact will be minimalised?

This may depend on more flexibility in the resources made available and more comprehensive approaches in how those resources are utilized. The debate over relief and development and the attention that has been paid to the transition between them (sometimes called the “*continuum*”) have led to a polarization of various sources of funds (the relief and development “*pots*”) and allowed some important actors to ignore the distinct possibility that the alleviation of poverty could reduce the impact --- and hence the cost --- of emergencies. Some donors have lately drawn upon this archived understanding of earlier decades and made funding available in such a way that would better suit the conditions (and enhanced understanding of them) that the intended beneficiaries are facing. This could mean that assistance and the material, financial and food resources they require be planned and programmed on a multi-year basis, as is being done in some rare instances now.

With these arguments in mind, the following questions arise: Will the Government and international community wait until the next widespread rain failure (given historical cycles of four to five years, the next is due sometime around 2004 --- just two years away) before ample resources and activities again flow to Somali region and elsewhere in Ethiopia? Will that response resemble the food aid and emergency feeding and water programs of the most recent emergency? And will it carry with it the same resolve witnessed in 2001 and in 1994 following the preceding droughts and that which echoed following the drought before that?

Your comments are welcome: un-eue@un.org

NEWS

Polio Free in 2005

A house-to-house campaign was launched to vaccinate children under the age of five against polio in Somali Region. In a move to “achieve polio-free status by 2005” in Ethiopia, WHO together with UNICEF have allied with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health (MOH), Rotary International, the Government of Japan, the Government of Norway, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Major Stakeholders Meet in Tigray

Meetings were held between some of the major stakeholders in Tigray Regional State (TRS) in early April to review recovery programme progress in Tigray and Afar. Presentations were made by the Regional Government, the World Bank, REST, the Director of the Peace and Development Institute in Addis Ababa and members of the UN Country Team.

Will the Government international community wait until the next widespread rain failure (given historical cycles of four to five years, the next is due sometime around 2004---just two years away) before ample resources and activities again flow to Somali region and elsewhere in Ethiopia?



25 APRIL 2002

The Regional Government stressed that Tigray had been on the front lines of wars dating back to the Italian occupation. The result of this continuous exposure to war is poverty, underdevelopment and interruptions in the progress of development and investment, especially that which was initiated after 1991.

With only eight NGOs currently working in Tigray and far fewer in Afar, the Regional Government expressed interest in receiving more support from the international community. Members of the Regional Government also acknowledged a need for normalisation of relations, trade and exchange with Eritrea, qualifying that statement by noting that an undefined period of time was needed for the necessary environment to be established.

As one of the conclusions to the meeting, a task force was established and is scheduled to meet 15 May in Addis Ababa to strategise future recovery assistance.

East Hararghe in Need of Seeds for the *belg*

Preliminary findings indicate that in some of the areas of East Hararghe, there is a reported shortfall of seeds right before the height of the planting season. The Early Warning and Planning Service of the Oromiya DPPB in Addis confirmed that from the necessary total of 700 mt of various types of seed for all of East Hararghe, only a total of 140 mt has been pledged so far to cover the needs of Babile, Bedeno, Grawa and Kurfachele weredas. The remaining 12 weredas of East Haraghe have not yet received pledges at a time when there is only an estimated 15 days left for planting and limited possibilities for local purchase.

Flood Affects Thousands

On 13 April the Awash River broke its banks and flooded Dubti wereda in Afar. The flood so far has affected 4,000 people and has displaced 1,000 from their homes. According to the DPPC, its office has started sending seeds, supplementary food, clothing and plastic sheets to the area for those in need. Reports from Somalia Region also indicate that the water level of the Wabe Shebele River has increased although not yet leading to flooding in Kelafo and Mustahil, both areas that depend on flood recession agriculture. (Flooding in some lowland, riveraine areas is an annual occurrence in the country.)

Water Provision Expected to Stop

Somali National Regional State (SNRS), UNICEF and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) provision of funds to several NGOs for the tankering of water in Hartishek, Fafan, Denan, Kebri Dehar, Shilabo and Debewoyin of Somalia region, is now expected to come to an end along with the arrival of the Gu rains in mid April.

Testing to Verify Presence of RVF

Based on an Ethiopian Government request, FAO is building the country's capacity in terms of surveillance and diagnostic capacity for Rift Valley Fever (RVF) and other vector born diseases that have a negative implication on Ethiopian trade. In pastoralist areas, FAO is currently in the process of building laboratories and providing training in order to take serum blood sampling from 20,000 livestock to verify the absence of RVF and other diseases in Ethiopiain order to influence a lifting of the livestock ban imposed by Saudi Arabia.



25 APRIL 2002

Donor Assistance Group offers support to the PRSP

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Federal Level Consultation was conducted in Addis Ababa end March 2002. The consultation was highly supported with over 450 participants from government, civil society, parliament and development partners. The aim of the consultation was to build on the findings from the wereda and regional level consultations and feed the outcomes in to the full PRSP document.

UNDP on behalf of the Donor Assistance Group (DAG) in Ethiopia, announced that donor support was committed to further the PRSP process, as it is considered to have a strong potential to serve as a bridge for strengthening more effective relationships among development partners. For sustained practice and further institutionalization of this kind of multi-stakeholder forum, a regular joint forum to monitor and manage the PRSP process was suggested.

The full PRSP is expected to be finalized by May 2002.

Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission Conveys Decision

Sixteen months after the end of the conflict, the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission (EEBC) handed down a ruling on the territories disputed by Ethiopia and Eritrea in The Hague on 13 April 2002. The boundary was decided by a five-member panel of judges, treaty experts and international jurists.

Although both sides accepted that the decision would be final and binding when they signed the Algiers peace accord of December 2000, a 60-day period was given for both sides to submit queries on the decision and 45 days for the EEBC to respond in writing.

Ethiopian and Eritrean UNCTs Meet in Addis

National Officers and agency heads from the Eritrean and Ethiopian United Nations Country Teams met for the first time in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (and for the fifth time since the war between the two countries), to discuss humanitarian and development assistance to support peace-building and reconciliation efforts. Accordingly, assessments on the current humanitarian situation and the state of recovery assistance were given by the country teams, while the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) presented an update on peacekeeping operations. In conclusion, the participants developed a draft action plan and exchanged experiences related to the recovery of affected populations, reconciliation and confidence-building measures and activities related to joint UN programming and advocacy strategy. The draft action plan that emanated from the meeting will be used as a framework to develop humanitarian recovery and development activities for both countries.

Support was committed to further the PRSP process, as it is considered to have a strong potential to serve as a bridge for strengthening more effective relationships among development partners.