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UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM ETHIOPIA



### Current Resettlement Underway

Reports have been received of resettlement activities ongoing in the country. ▶

## Major Developments in the Drought Emergency: Emergency and Improved Seed Supply Critical for 2003 Planting Season



As discussed in the January Focus on Ethiopia, both emergency seed and improved seed and other agricultural inputs supply is of paramount importance to recover or keep the agricultural production at acceptable levels for 2003.

The Ministry of Agriculture at the moment is able to provide information on emergency seed need requirements stratified by zones for Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Somali, Dire Dawa and SNNP regions. Seed needs by crop types and varieties need to be reflected for a given woreda in order to reflect the availability of seeds and the gap for each type of crop and variety. The average landholding cultivated per household may vary from 0.25 to 1ha. Therefore, depending on what figure is being used, seed requirements can vary four-fold. Furthermore, the planting ratio per hectare also varies for each crop, seed variety and seed quality, making estimates on seed requirements difficult. MoA uses a working figure of 0.5 ha of land on the average for each farm family as a basis for the estimation of beneficiaries and seed requirements by type of crop and variety per woreda. The share of crop area per woreda generally indicates the mix required for that particular woreda.

For the on-going *belg* and the forthcoming *meher* season, the Ministry of Agriculture requested seed interventions in 7 regions for a total amount of about USD 15 million. Since the launch of the appeal in December 2002 for 2003 requirements, the request is under re-investigation and will most probably be revised downwards. Nevertheless, until the exact figure is known, the

### NEWS ▶

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#### Encouraging Response from Donors for Relief Food Aid

Supporting such a large number of people this early in the year has been possible due to a timely donor response to the drought. ▶

#### Cereal Pipeline Covered Until Mid June

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28 February 2003

figure of USD 15 million still needs to be considered as the requirement for seed interventions.

According to a compilation of seed related interventions of various implementing organizations, carried out by FAO, the shortfall in interventions reflected in budget is approximately USD 8.75 million. In reality, however, the figure must be treated with much care, among others because various organizations such as FAO decided for different reasons to provide emergency seeds for other land holding sizes than the standard of 0.5ha, which influences the budget for their intervention per beneficiary.

In the January Focus on Ethiopia, it was already mentioned that in 2002 there was an estimated 70% reduction in the use of improved seeds compared to 2001 and a 55% drop in credit contracts to purchase agricultural inputs from 2001 to 2002. Since the sale of improved seeds in 2002 was so disappointing, the quantities of carry over stocks for 2003 are large. The Ethiopian Seed Enterprise (ESE) and the Pioneer Hybrid Seed Enterprise PLC (PHSE) have 16,577.3 tons and 1,259 tons of carry over stocks respectively (November 2002), out of which, wheat and maize seeds combined represent 96%. Altogether, including improved seed production in 2003, the total amount of improved seeds available this year will be close to 30,000 tons. This quantity excludes production from the Farmer Based Seed Production and Marketing Schemes (FBSPMS) and seed imports for 2002. Seed imports were about 300 tons of mainly pulses and vegetable seeds. It is therefore anticipated that the expected stocks for 2003 will be sufficient to cover demand.

Despite this favourable view of seed availability, some regions have reported seed shortfalls (SNNPR and Tigray). Organisations engaged in the provision of seeds are also encountering difficulties locating local improved varieties for purchase and redistribution (ICRC and CRS).

The demand for loans and credits to purchase agricultural extension packages including improved seeds for 2003 is most likely to remain at a level similarly low to that of 2002 and below half the number of farmers who received credits in 2000 and 2001.

On top of the critical situation for seed supply, the inefficiency of Ethiopia's grain market adds now to the gravity of the current crisis.

#### Inefficiency of Ethiopia's grain market adds to the gravity of the current crisis

Food production in Ethiopia has increased by 70% since the 1980s. Cereal output in the 1990s averaged 10 million tons a year, 4 million more tons per year than in the 1980s. On the other hand Ethiopia experienced a tremendous population growth from approximately 40 million in the early 1980s to over 65 million in the new millennium. However, in 2000 and 2001 two consecutive years of bumper harvests contributed to an 80% decline of producer prices in 2002. Ethiopia managed to raise agricultural output, particularly since 1996 but failed to develop a marketing system that supports and stabilizes market prices for staple crops such as maize and sorghum. A recent study presented by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is stating, the underlying problem is that most poor farmers find themselves outside the market economy. A limited and ineffective marketing system and infrastructure and the absence of publicly available market information have compounded the challenges that confront Ethiopia's food security. According to the IFPRI study, these problems also aggravated the precarious food situation and the consequences of climatic hazards in 2002 as bumper harvest surplus grain from 2000 and 2001 could not be adequately stored or

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28 February 2003

redistributed to deficit areas. Post harvest losses were therefore enormous. The IFPRI study proposes that implications of governance and policy implementation urgently need to be addressed and adjusted to remove market distortions, reinstall and enlarge agricultural subsidy programmes and link development of agricultural production with development of functional and efficient markets. On the other hand Ethiopia's economy cannot support heavy agrarian subsidies as the World Bank and the IMF who are the major development financiers of the country may consider this step as a back track on the road to market and economic liberalization. However, if drastic measures are not taken within the coming few years, Ethiopia will witness, as it has this year for the first time in its agricultural history, cash crop, surplus and subsistence producing areas all facing food shortages and suffering among its population.

Malnutrition to be monitored closely  
as most critical phase of the drought begins

The nutritional status of the drought-affected population has been discussed at length in the January issue of the Focus on Ethiopia. A total of 80 nutritional surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2003 during the drought emergency. The surveys highlighted the need for rapid interventions in most seriously affected areas and the hotspots such as the migrants from East and West Hararghe that remain in camps and with individual families in Bale Zone. Some pocket areas have not yet been surveyed due to geographic remoteness, insecurity or capacity constraints. However, most areas of concern are known. Eighteen nutritional surveys conducted in Oromiya, Amhara and SNNPR (Gurage, Hadiya, Khambhata, Wolayita and Tembaro) in December 2002 showed global acute malnutrition rates (GAM) of 9% except in Idabo Abote in Oromiya Region which showed 16.1% GAM and 4.8% severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

These hot spots, especially in Guraghe and Sidama, require rapid interventions with general ration distribution, supplementary and therapeutic feeding. In order to strengthen the capacity to manage nutritional emergencies in country, UNICEF has initiated training on management of therapeutic feeding and supplementary feeding for health professionals from drought affected regions, NGOs, partner agencies and Universities. A total of 110 participants are expected to be trained.

Measles outbreaks have been reported from Somali and SNNP regions. The Inter-Agency Co-ordinating Committee has finalised the plans for measles and vitamin A campaigns in drought affected areas targeting some 16.2 million children under 15 years of age. However, there is a shortfall of USD 8.6 million, which needs to be addressed immediately.

Water sources on the verge of deteriorating

From the more than 2.7 million people experiencing water shortages, the percentage of those in need being reached is 27%. However, this still reflects that less than half of the affected population are receiving water assistance. UNICEF estimates that funding received so far for emergency water interventions is going to be exhausted by the end of March. Hence, Ethiopia is on the way to experiencing an alarming situation particularly in those areas of the 6 regions mostly affected by water scarcity. If *belg* rains are sufficient, this will lessen the problem in some areas.

Thousands of water wells that were still productive in November and December last year are now drying up. The case of Tigray is particularly preoccupying and affects are especially seen in areas such as Raya Azebo woreda. On average, 30 wells have been drying up each month since December 2002. This is due to

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28 February 2003

lowering groundwater levels and below average rainfall over the last three years. Present drought conditions are stressing and overstressing water availability. Because boreholes are drying up, the pressure on remaining boreholes is growing. Maintenance needs on existing boreholes is subsequently increasing and water replenishment rates are not coping with the demands of greater numbers of people.

In many areas, particularly semi-arid ones such as Afar and Somali Regions and eastern Oromia, water tankering remains the only immediate emergency life-saving solution even though it is expensive. UNICEF, together with the local NGO Education for Development Association (EFDA), is engaged in an interesting and innovative alternative of providing water to people in some of the worst affected areas along the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railroad. Starting this month, more than 3,000 people in Ellala and Ebiti kebeles of Fentale woreda are receiving safe water by train as part of an agreement between UNICEF and the NGO. Every day, 10,000 liters of water is being supplied in 400 25-liter jerry cans. In addition, 7,500 liters of water per day is being supplied by truck to 2,500 people in Tututi kebele of Fentale woreda. Diesel fuel is also being provided for eight deep well schemes in Fentale woreda since 13 January, benefiting over 10,000 people and 35,000 cattle.

#### Reports of *belg* and unusual rains in parts of the country

Data from the National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA) indicate that only western parts of Zone 5 in Afar Region and adjacent areas in Oromia Zone (Amhara Region) received some rains (5-25 mm) during the first part of February.

Zone 2 of Afar Region, South Tigray Zone (Tigray Region), North Wello Zone (Amhara Region), highlands of West Hararghe Zone and southern parts of Jimma Zones (Oromia Region) and most of SNNPR received 5-25 mm of rainfall during the second half of February. Unusual torrential rains occurred also in Mieso woreda of West Hararghe Zone as well as parts of Zone 3 of Afar Region and in Jijiga Zone of Somali Region. In General, most *belg* growing areas received rainfall in February.

NMSA predicted that the *belg* rain producing weather systems will intensify during the second half of February. Normal to above normal rainfall is likely to produce a positive impact in most *belg* producing areas on current season agricultural activities and availability of pasture and water for livestock.

FEWS and the UN-EUE confirm NMSA predictions through field reports of good rains starting from mid-February in southwestern parts of the country, central and eastern Afar and the highlands of eastern Oromiya, which indicate a possible start of the *belg* season rainfall. WFP also confirms rains commencing in Tigray and Amhara.

Your comments are welcome: [un-eue@un.org](mailto:un-eue@un.org)

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## NEWS

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### **UN-EUE Mission to Tigray Reports Concerns in Relief Food and Seed Deliveries**

A team from UN-EUE traveled to Tigray region from 9 to 22 February 2003 to assess the humanitarian situation in the region with special emphasis on drought relief and the ongoing humanitarian assistance program in the region.

The Joint Government-UN Appeal for 2003 identified 1.8 million people in need of relief food in Tigray region. Areas of particular

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28 February 2003

concern include Atsibi-Womberta, Wukro, Erob, Gulo Mekeda and Atherom woredas in East Tigray Zone, Raya Azebo, Hintalo-wajirat, Alamata and Endamekoni woredas in South Tigray Zone. In all affected areas, relief food distributions were ongoing although delayed arrival (as is common in other parts of the country) of commodities was reported in most areas visited. The fact that general distributions comprise only cereals is aggravating nutrition levels, according to reports of community and local officials, although physical signs of malnutrition could not yet be observed. This issue, however, needs to be followed up carefully because WFP Compas reports and DPPC and NGO plans indicate that 4,100 tons of supplementary food has indeed been distributed for the months of January and February in Tigray. This represents 85% of the total requirements for the two months and is a higher percentage reached and met than in any other region in Ethiopia.

Another crucial and urgent matter was the delay in delivery of seeds for *belg* season planting and for long cycle crops (maize and sorghum) mainly in South Tigray Zone. Although the Regional DPPB and Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) had already submitted a request for farm inputs supply for a total of 2.2 million ETB for *belg* and *meher* season seeds, nothing has yet materialized. Farmers have prepared their farmlands for the *belg* and anytime rains come they can start planting, although a delay in seed supply looms as a possible constraint.

The physical condition of livestock is generally poor due to a shortage of grass and feed and water and also due to the lack of a crop residue reserve as a result of the poor harvest from last year's crop. Unless *belg* rains (March to May) start on time, the condition of livestock could deteriorate further. No outbreak of human and livestock diseases was reported in the region.

### **Current Resettlement Underway**

Reports have been received of resettlement activities ongoing in the country. Food Security and Agriculture Committee (FSAC) decided to issue a joint statement from its members, i.e. donors, UN, and NGOs to initiate dialogue with the government.

#### 15,000 Households Resettle in Tigray Region

According to the Regional Government of Tigray Region Resettlement Programme Desk Coordinator, West Tigray Zone administrator and Kefta Humera Wereda council office, preparation is being made to resettle 15,000 households (about 75,000 people) who are coming from environmentally degraded and drought affected areas of the region and areas where land fragmentation has necessitated resettlement. Most of the people will be from Central Zone of Tigray and will settle in West Tigray Zone. Although planned for immediate undertaking, zonal officials reported some gaps to start the resettlement operation. They include: a lack of construction materials, inadequate water supply and health posts, and shortage of food supplies for the settlers until they get their own harvest. Despite these gaps, mobilization of people started during the last week of February. It seems that more time for preparation would have helped to make a smoother start of the operation. The first phase started at the end of February with 5,000 households (only heads of households will move initially) who are willing to resettle voluntarily. The selected destination sites are situated along Tekeze River and following the Shirar-Humera connecting road under construction.

#### Arrivals of Migrants from Hararghe and Arsi to Bale Zone Continues Daily

Oromiya DPPC has reported that the number of migrants from East and West Hararghe and Arsi zones to Shawe camp, Bale Zone, is increasing steadily (nearly 100 per day). Currently there are over

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28 February 2003

38,000 migrants in the zone. To minimize the number of newcomers, the Oromiya DPPC is trying to stop the influx by setting up temporary shelters at the checkpoint around Robe (zonal main town). However, the office stressed that there is a crisis due to the shortage of resources to address the shelter, food and water needs of the people at the checkpoint. Meanwhile, a study is underway to identify an appropriate area and provide basic needs (shelter, food distribution, water tankering etc.) to resettle those people in different areas around the zone. Additionally, reports are also received that people rejected some of the areas suggested for future resettlement because these places seemed inappropriate and unsuitable for their resettlement and instead some people are moving to Wellega without government assistance. Therefore, Oromia DPPC is requesting immediate assistance for the migrants as the situation is getting worse.

#### Resettlement also Reported in Amhara Region

The current destinations of settlers from Wag Hamra zone include Metema, Quara and Tach Armacho in the western part of Amhara Region.

### **DPPC Info Center Progresses**

The formation of the DPPC Information Center is moving forward with an expected launch date of early April. Contribution information is being collected from major humanitarian stakeholders in order to obtain a clearer picture of the emergency response against the 7 December 2002 Emergency Assistance Requirements and Implementation Options document issued jointly by the Government and United Nations and a detailed database developed to monitor the resource situation during the course of the emergency. Other progress includes the recent advertisement of the post of Technical Advisor to be filled by early March and the purchase of equipment for the office.

To take advantage of and ensure increased collaboration among all partners, the DPPC established the Information Center enlisting the support of the UN Country Team and engaging the participation of a technical committee to provide support and guidance in the determination of the way in which information will be gathered, analyzed, processed and disseminated.

### **MoA/FAO Emergency Coordination Unit to Determine Priority Areas and Assistance Gaps in the Agricultural Sector in 2003**

The FAO Emergency Coordination Unit, in support of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), has taken a multi-pronged approach to agricultural sector activities in relation to the drought: coordination and donor advocacy, as well as the funding or implementation of livestock and seed projects. The Unit has compiled a coordination spreadsheet by region, woreda, and kebele of ongoing and planned emergency interventions by implementers in areas of crops, livestock and water. This tool, which will be continuously updated, aims to help determine priority areas of intervention and assistance gaps in the agricultural sector in 2003 in order to increase coordination between agencies and advocacy to donors.

The largest requirement for seeds and related activities is for Amhara Region. In Oromiya Region, a number of seed and tool and water activities are either ongoing or are planned. For SNNPR, there are few emergency activities planned or underway, mainly in crop production. However, there remains a gap between activities and requirements in all regions. For more information please contact [crisp@un.org](mailto:crisp@un.org) or 444160.

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28 February 2003

## **CARE: Nutritional Status in Pocket Areas of Hararghe Improved But Problems Remain**

While the new interagency nutrition survey indicates that nutrition conditions are improving in parts of the Hararghe zone, reports from field staff this week indicate there may still be hot spots where the malnutrition has the potential to become a serious problem. In two PA's in lowland Kurfachelle field staff identified serious levels of malnutrition among children under five, and observed that malaria and meningitis are also becoming a serious threat to the population. Five deaths from meningitis have been reported so far, though Woreda officials have yet to confirm the figure. While these PA's have been receiving food under the JEOP program it is thought that the distribution of only grains during the last several months may be insufficient to sustain the nutritional status of the children in these communities. In response to this problem CARE has arranged to reallocate 36 tons of its supplementary food resources in an effort to stabilize and improve nutrition status in these PA's.

## **Encouraging Response from Donors for Relief Food Aid**

Supporting such a large number of people this early in the year has been possible due to a timely donor response to the drought. The early pledges, in combination with the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve (EFSR), has allowed food aid to be in place in time. Factors that led to this response included an efficient and credible government early warning system, the active involvement of donors in the assessment process from the very beginning of the drought crisis, and early advocacy by the Government, United Nations agencies, NGOs, donor representatives, and the media. The deteriorating conditions were brought to the attention of the public and to donor headquarters starting in July 2002 and followed through to November, when the impact of the drought on the harvest was fully assessed. The prompt preparation and release of the joint Government/United Nations appeal in early December also helped to get timely support of donors in late 2002 and early 2003.

## **Cereal Pipeline Covered Until Mid June**

Pledges of relief food cover around 54% of 2003 requirements so far. Contributions through the DPPC, WFP and NGOs total 800,000 mt leaving 46%, or 650,000 mt, unresourced out of the total 1.45 million mt of food assistance required. Taking into account current contributions, the cereals pipeline is estimated to cover until mid June, if pledges can be confirmed and repayments to the Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) made quickly. Blended Food requirements are only 50% covered for the January to June period.

Though the Ethiopian Emergency Food Reserve has been under pressure due to increasing requirements and outstanding loans from late-2002, the accelerated shipments of cereal donations are boosting the levels of the Reserve for the next three months. Current physical stocks, scheduled repayments and confirmed shipments are sufficient to maintain distributions at planned levels for March, April and May. In addition, there are substantial donations for which shipment dates are to be confirmed.

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