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Results of Recent Rainfall in Afar

The northern part of Afar in Zone 2 and in Eli Daar woreda of Zone 1 recent rains were not significant while grazing conditions as well as fodder availability have relatively improved in the southern part of Zone 1 and in Zone 4. ►

UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia: Drought Emergency Update



Unusual rains in many parts of the country

Unusual recent rains fell in central Ethiopia with mixed impact but mostly beneficial to water and pasture replenishment. In the north, farmers used rains to begin land preparation (South Tigray) for the belg season. In Central, Southern and Eastern Tigray, rains helped to alleviate water and pasture shortages. Further south, in the mid and highlands of Amhara region (North Shewa), central Oromiya and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) rains may complicate ongoing harvests of teff. In the lowlands of Oromiya, including East and West Hararghe, and Arsi, areas hard-hit by the present drought, the rains contributed to better water and pasture. Further east, in Shinille and Jijiga Zones of Somali Region, short rains expected in November were late but a few days rain (less than 30mm) in December impacted positively on livestock-dependent populations that have been under extreme stress. Unfortunately, the impact was less in eastern parts of Shinille. In general, rains occurring in December/January were not being used to plant crops with the possible exception of belg-dependent areas in the northeast and transitional crops in the southwest (SNNPR). However, they had a positive impact on pasture, fodder and water availability for both humans and livestock.

No significant change in emergency requirements for 2003 but relief food aid experiences usual difficulties

In Benishangul-Gumuz region, Kurmuk woreda and some other areas have experienced water shortage for the first time in history. This region has never been hit by drought before and therefore is a perfect example of the severity of the present crisis. An additional

NEWS ►

Relief Food Covers 45% of 2003 Requirements

Contributions through the DPPC, WFP and NGOs cover 45% of 2003 requirements so far out of the total 1.4 million tonnes of food assistance required. ►

Timely and Adequate Seed and other Agricultural Input Supply Paramount

To not hamper in advance the forthcoming agricultural production, seed and other agricultural input supply is of paramount importance. ►

Providing Assistance through the NDDPF

In order for the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund (NDDPF) to be fully operational, it is recommended that the fund be built up to US\$ 16 million with the optimal amount recommended at US\$ 55 million. ►

Workshop on Settlement and Resettlement in Ethiopia

UN-EUE and The Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists organized a joint, three-days workshop from 28 – 30 January 2003. ►

Pipeline update

The relief food pipeline has improved greatly in the past month. ►

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30,000 beneficiaries have been identified that will need assistance for 6 months starting from March. An additional 20,000 tonnes of relief food have been added to the total requirements for 2003.

However, relief food assistance suffers from the usual problems such as delivery and distribution delays, reduced rations and targeting problems in certain areas. Even though requirements for the first months of 2003 were pledged and should be available for distribution, requirements and deliveries show shortfalls of approximately 15%. Therefore the full ration of 15kg is being cut down to 12.5kg/person/month, which again is nothing unusual.

According to WFP, pledges of relief food cover around 45% of 2003 requirements so far. Contributions through the DPPC, WFP and NGOs total 648,000 tonnes leaving 55%, or 793,500 tonnes, unresourced out of the total 1.4 million tonnes of food assistance required. Taking into account current contributions, the cereals pipeline is estimated to cover until late May, if pledges can be confirmed and repayments to the Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) can be made quickly. EFSR will be severely tested this year: the capacity is 400,000 tonnes but with cereal requirements peaking at over 150,000 tonnes per month, repayments to the Reserve must be made quickly to allow further loans. The Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) food stocks currently stand at 88,767 tonnes as of 27 January.

Relief goods off-take, particularly relief food, at Djibouti port has proved its capacity in December when during one day off-take at the port reached 6,500 tonnes.

In general most emergency interventions to date fall behind planned schedules for various reasons. While coordination is good at the federal level, in some regions and more widely spread at lower administrative levels coordination of emergency activities either experiences difficulties or is not existing at all. This situation needs close attention and action has to be taken as soon as possible to start coordination activities at regional and local levels.

Lack of funding response for water interventions implies serious shortfall in emergency assistance

Water interventions such as water tankering, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing water schemes and borehole drilling are being undertaken in all affected areas of the country. Nevertheless, UNICEF estimates that of the more than 2 million people that need to be assisted, presently only 28% are covered by water interventions. This represents a serious shortfall that is particularly acute in parts of the most affected areas such as Afar Region.

Malnutrition at crisis proportions in worst affected areas and slowly increasing figures in other drought affected areas

Even though a deterioration in the nutritional status of the drought affected population can so far not be observed, there has nevertheless been a slow but gradual increase in Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) over the last few months in some of the drought affected areas of Ethiopia. Some areas are now above 10% GAM and there is no margin for error and the situation requires constant monitoring.

Efforts are being made to periodically update nutritional surveys but it is difficult due to the wide geographic area that needs to be covered and is also limited by the fact that cluster surveys can leave out pocket areas of high malnutrition. A series of nutritional surveys were conducted in December in areas of Oromiya, SNNPR and Amhara Regions, of which results will be available soon.

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However, most areas of concern are known and monitored. Areas where nutritional surveys reveal GAM higher than 10% should be a matter of serious concern and even the more if previous survey results showed lower percentage. An increasing trend gives indication of a worsening nutritional and hence humanitarian situation. From the data and information so far available in Ethiopia, the following zones include areas of serious concern: Afar Zone 1 and Zone 3, East and West Hararghe of Oromiya Region, Shinille and Fik Zones of Somali Region and Bale Zone of Oromiya Region reached crisis proportions with GAM that have been critically and unacceptably high (above 10% GAM). In parts of Arsi and East Shewa of Oromiya Region, in East Tigray, in North and South Gonder, Waghamra and South Wollo of Amhara Region, in Wolayita and Gurage of SNNPR and in Konso Special Woreda malnutrition figures are slowly increasing but have not yet reached crisis proportions. Nevertheless, also in parts of these areas GAM is above 10% and therefore serious attention has to be given to all above mentioned areas. Furthermore, at this time of the year just after harvest, normally malnutrition should decrease due to higher food availability, hence, already surveys indicate increases in malnutrition.

The following section presents some recent nutrition data from critical areas where interventions are imminent. Follow-up nutritional surveys in two hard-hit areas along the eastern escarpment of South Wollo zone in Amhara Region (Dessie Zuria and Kalu) indicate that the situation has not significantly improved with the *meher* (main) harvest. The NGO CONCERN reported that unacceptable levels of malnutrition of 17.2 % GAM in Dessie Zuria and 16.6% GAM in Kalu still persisted in November 2002. Concern has since been providing supplementary food in the area. South Wollo experienced production declines of 40 % when compared to 2001/2. Preliminary results of a nutritional survey done in December by DPPC with support of SC-UK for Shinille Zone of Somali Region indicate that in the west, Afdem and Mieso, GAM is 13.7 %. While rates in the west are serious, they are lower than the east, possibly due to intense full general and supplementary ration distribution by ICRC. In the east (Erer, Shinille, Dembel and Ayisha), the situation is of crisis proportions among pastoralists (16.4% GAM) and particularly agropastoralists (18.0% GAM) with high under five mortality rates of more than 3/10,000/day which is alarmingly above the 1/10,000/day cut off. In hard hit West Hararghe, CARE, other NGOs, WFP and local authorities are currently conducting a follow-up nutritional survey to the one carried out in September.

When food is not available, the nutritional status is highly dependent on timely and adequate food aid distributions. Targeted and/or blanket supplementary feeding is on-going in most of these areas of serious concern with the exception of Arsi. In addition therapeutic feeding is on-going in Waghamra where MSF - Switzerland is managing a center, in Hartisheik, Somali Region with MCDO (Mother & Child Development Organization). Furthermore some hospitals in East and West Hararghe do also administer therapeutic feeding to some of their patients (Chiro/Gelemso Hospital in West Hararghe and Besidemo and Harar Hospitals in East Hararghe). Generally, high global malnutrition indicates constraints in relief food distributions. Supplementary feeding cannot have the wanted effect if general food rations are insufficient or are being distributed irregularly or if distributions are being delayed.

Reports on severe malnutrition from Bale Zone, where people migrated mostly from the worst affected drought areas of East and West Hararghe trying to resettle, are confirmed. In Shawe Camp (Menna Woreda) the Ethiopian Evangelical Church – Mekane

The very critical months are still to come and that the unusual rains in December managed to replenish some water and pasture but did not contribute to improve the food and nutritional situation of those most affected. It will be essential, that food is delivered on time and in sufficient quantity to avert a major crisis and loss of life in the coming two to three months (February to April)

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Yesus (EECMY) screened a total of 4,029 children through weight for height and found 15% Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). MSF-Holland needed to open a Therapeutic Feeding Center (TFC) to assist 120 severely malnourished children. While these migrants are a special category of affected population, this does not hide the fact that the needs are very real. UNICEF provided supplementary food equivalent to for 4 weeks supply for the severely malnourished in the TFC. According to the Regional DPPB there are approximately 37,000 people that migrated. The daily influx is said to be between 40 and 100 people. In general, health services for these migrants are inadequate and mortality rate among the migrated people is therefore relatively high (higher than 1/10,000/day).

The Hartesheik refugee-camp-area-IDPs in Somali Region also represent a situation requiring immediate attention and are also another category of non-drought victims. Due to the border closure during October 2002 generally the food security situation of the population in Hartesheik town and the IDPs, many of whom have been in Hartesheik for over 10 years, has been deteriorating. IDPs along with local population have been receiving irregular food aid from DPPC. Due to general food and water shortage, admission to the feeding center increased from 215 in December 2002 to 467 in January 2003. The situation in Hartesheik people are facing is of longer term concern and therefore needs longer-term solutions. There is an urgent need that the Government and partners discuss and come up with projects and programs for a durable, sustainable solution.

It is important that the trend of slowly increasing malnutrition has to be observed and monitored closely and very carefully. Even the more when knowing that the very critical months are still to come and that the unusual rains in December managed to replenish some water and pasture but did not improve the food and nutritional situation of those most affected. It will be essential, that food is delivered on time and in sufficient quantity to avert a major crisis and loss of life in the coming two to three months (February to April).

Timely and adequate seed and other agricultural input supply paramount to ensure the agricultural potential of the next planting seasons

The 2003 total cereal and pulse production is estimated at about 9.27 million tonnes (FAO/MoA). At this level, cereal and pulse production is about 25% below 2002 post-harvest estimates and 21% below the average for the previous five years. As a result, the cereal import requirement in 2003 is estimated at nearly 2.3 million tonnes. Only part of this will be covered by emergency food aid requirements of 1.4 million tonnes and the remainder will need to be covered through commercial and concessional imports.

Not to hamper in advance the forthcoming agricultural production, seed and other agricultural input supply is of paramount importance. ICRC is extending its emergency intervention to assist the most vulnerable people suffering from the combined effects of poverty, severe drought and persisting threats of insecurity. The ICRC will distribute 37,100 tonnes of food, 4,920 tonnes of seeds and fertilizer to up to 700,000 people over a period of 11 months between January and November 2003. But this is not enough. Many farmers suffer from denied credits to buy agricultural packages necessary to produce maize and sorghum. The substantial reduction in the use of agricultural inputs (70% reduction in the use of improved seeds in 2002 compared to 2001; 55% drop in credit contracts to purchase agricultural inputs from 2001 to 2002) and subsequent yield losses that contributed together with the drought to the significant agricultural production decrease in 2002. To date

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Massive migration of animals and humans out of Shinille Zone in Somali Region

Since December massive out migration of animals and humans is being observed from Shinille Zone in Somali Region. Out migrating people with their livestock have chosen different destinations. So far roughly 7,000 heads of livestock, mainly cattle migrated to East Hararghe in Oromiya Region while around 6,000 animal heads migrated to Jijiga zone of Somali Region, and a further thousand heads were taken to Doba woreda in West Hararghe and into Amibara area of Afar Region.

At the end of December, more than 15,000 cattle had moved from Shinille zone. Dozens of cattle that could not make the journey were slaughtered along the road. Movements were also recorded from Dembel through the mountains with the usual destination of Erer Valley, Dakata Valley, Fafan Valley and Jerrer Valley all south of Shinille zone in Chinagsen.

At the beginning browsing animals such as camel, sheep and goats were left behind together with a few milking cows. Left behind were also most women and children who by now live from food aid. Male calves were killed before the trip because they would not be able to survive the trip.

Another exodus is taking place across the border to Somaliland. Since the beginning of January whole pastoralist families from Shinille Zone have been starting to move with all their animals and other assets across the border to Somaliland. According to humanitarian assessment teams in the zone, both people and livestock are migrating en masse towards Somaliland (Awdal, Ashade, Lowyade, Dadar and Giriyaad) to areas, which reportedly received good hays/dalalo rains and as a result, have better pasture and water resources. No estimated figures of animals and people migrating to Somaliland are available at the time.

From 12 to 17 January, a multi-agency rapid assessment was undertaken in order to organize a coordinated emergency response to the rising needs of the migrating population. In conclusion, the mission estimates that all woredas in Shinille Zone are in a desperate situation. Both people who have been left behind and those migrating need assistance. People and livestock are generally weak and those migrating are facing difficulties like food shortage, cold conditions and lack of potable water. Main diseases reported include malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea, bronchitis, common colds and pneumonia.

Conflict on natural resources in most severely hit pastoralist areas continue

Clashes and conflict for scarce resources continue between several tribes and ethnic groups in and around Afar Region that is further hampering the critical drought emergency situation. The main road crossing Afar Region that feeds Addis Ababa with imported goods from Djibouti port has once more been closed for UN personnel due to security threats.

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

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Providing Assistance Through NDPPF

The National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund (NDPPF) was established in 2000 with the objectives of having a readily available cash reserve to combat disasters until other resources are mobilized locally or internationally. It also aims at assisting the implementation of Employment Generation Schemes (EGS) to achieve national food security. As of 27 January 2003, the NDPPF has received about US\$ 8.5 million (75.1 million Birr) from government, the donor community and other sources. In order to be fully operational, it is recommended that the fund be built up to US\$ 16 million with the optimal amount recommended at US\$ 55 million. However, the NDPPF has already given loans from the existing US\$ 8.6 million. For instance as part of its pledge for the year 2001, DPPC has borrowed and reimbursed over 32.9 million birr for the purchase of 40,000 tonnes of grain with the guarantee given by EU. Moreover, a loan amounting to US\$ 400,000 was given to DPPC with USAID guarantee for the purchase of emergency improved seeds for farmers in different regions. The fund is accessible to NGOs and communities alike with loans made on a guaranteed repayment basis.

Results of Recent Rainfall in Afar

UN-EUE traveled to Afar to assess the humanitarian situation in the region following recent unexpected short rains (daada). In the northern part of Afar in Zone 2 and in Eli Daar woreda of Zone 1 recent rains were not significant resulting in continued water stress, water trucking along Afdera road and people searching for water in Bure near the Eritrean border. On the other hand grazing conditions as well as fodder availability have relatively improved in the southern parts of Zones 1 and in Zone 4, up to a northern limit situated between Yallo (west) and Sardo (along the Djibouti highway). In many places, due to variable intensity and duration of the rain, the grazing condition for camels and goats in absence of proper grass regeneration is also better. In Yallo (north of Zone 4, along the escarpment) the assessment team reported cattle stress and observed five hour treks between grazing and watering locations. South of Yallo there are tensions among Afar clans due to grazing access restrictions.

Workshop on Settlement and Resettlement in Ethiopia

UN-EUE and the Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists organized a joint, three-days workshop from 28 – 30 January 2003. The objectives were to discuss the current status of settlement and resettlement in Ethiopia and to provide recommendations for appropriate programming and future interventions in the light of the Government's renewed voluntary resettlement program. The workshop also presented findings of the socio-economic and environmental impact of resettlement and settlement carried out in the 1980s. About 20 research papers were presented covering a wide range of issues on sedentarization, resettlement, development induced displacements and peace-making with a view to develop an integrated approach. Most presented research papers referred to previous resettlement project endeavors, stressing that if renewed resettlement and settlement programs are to be initiated, they should be planned and implemented carefully and on a voluntary basis by taking into account a wider range of socio-economic and environmental variables. It was also stressed that resettlement policy should not neglect the long-term implications such as contacts, interrelations and cohabitation with local indigenous people, conflicts over scarce resources and the settlers' unavoidable identity problems. Most of the research papers recommended that resettlement in Ethiopia



Earth dam water pool in Gulubleh Haf, Zone 2. During normal climatic conditions this dam should be full of water in September and October, yet it is almost empty witnessing the serious water shortage conditions in this part of Afar Region.

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should be based on comprehensive studies, consulting people before relocating people.

Joint UN Project on Comprehensive School Health Program in Afar

A pilot "Comprehensive School Health Program" was initiated for Afar Region under the auspices of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). UNDP, WFP, WHO and UNICEF have recently signed a Letter of Intent regarding this coordinated UN response to improve the health and nutritional status of school children in Zone 1 of the region. The aims are to improve access to health and education facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities at schools. WFP is providing food under its school feeding program, funding for training and logistics support to move equipment and material for other partners; WHO, inter alia, will support improved immunization coverage through schools and other health campaigns; UNICEF will be responsible for provision of water points at all schools in the pilot area, or water supply through tankers, funds to establish separate toilet facilities for girls and boys, and support health initiatives with WHO; UNDP will oversee the provision of cash/material/technical assistance to improve access to water at schools through rainwater harvesting structures. The UN Resident Coordinator's office in Ethiopia will be responsible for overall coordination and monitoring the implementation of this pilot program and providing an initial start up contribution.

Pipeline update

The relief food pipeline has improved greatly in the past month. Secure contributions (WFP/Government/NGOs) cover 46 percent of cereal 2003 requirements. Though at a reduced ration rate (12.5 kg vs 15 kg per person per month), this would meet cereals needs until end-May. Furthermore, there are new contributions that have been announced and are under negotiation that could cover requirements for June as well.

Fortified blended food and vegetable oil are targeted at particularly vulnerable groups (children under five, pregnant and nursing women, the sick and elderly) and are distributed as a take-home ration with the basic cereal ration. Contributions of vegetable oil have been secured to cover most of 2003 requirements but are still to arrive in-country. However, the blended food is only 25 percent covered, and efforts are being made to mobilize more of this commodity. Blended food is currently inadequate to reach all the districts in need and allocations are being made only to the worst-hit areas.

With the increased loans of cereals, the Ethiopian Emergency Food Security Reserve has been under great pressure. In January, the physical stocks have been below the normal minimum operational level of 100,000 tonnes, with outstanding loans of over 300,000 tonnes. However, repayments for loans made in 2002 are scheduled for repayment before the end of March. Moreover, major donors are making efforts to ensure early shipments of recently confirmed contributions. If these shipments arrive on schedule, the stocks in the Reserve should be able to cope with the anticipated borrowings for March and April.

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. Tel.: 44 44 14 or 51 37 25