

PLEDGING SITUATION

Few pledges have been received towards the needs for the first three months of 2003, when requirements will substantially increase. Donors are urged to consider not only pledging urgently needed food for this period, but expediting emergency shipments as soon as possible, to avoid excessive demands on the Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) which would lower the stock below the recommended minimum level. The EFSR currently stands at 131,650 tonnes, before a loan of 48,000 tonnes is taken out by WFP to cover part of the distribution needs of November. A minimum of 70,000 tonnes of cereals is required to cover needs of 5.6 million people in November at reduced rations of 12.5 kg. Confirmation of announced pledges are required for further loans to be made from the EFSR to cover remaining November and December needs.

POTENTIAL SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS IN BALE

A joint mission conducted by UN-EUE, EECMY and Oromia Regional Government warns of an eventual social and environmental crisis in parts of Bale zone, where more than 20,000 migrants from East and West Hararghe and Arsi Zones are trying to settle. The migrants left their homes due to persistent and cumulative drawbacks in their livelihoods. Farmland shortages and recurrent failure of rains and periodic drought conditions and hence harvest failures forced them to leave. The migration is accompanied and aggravated by the drought in the east. A total of over 2 million people are currently affected in the region and numbers are expected to increase. The migrants do not have food, shelter, cloth, cooking utensils and access to medical services. Coughing and malnutrition was visible in the population, particularly in children, older people and nursing mothers. Lack of sanitation is aggravating the problems. It is reported that over ten children have died in a camp settlement due to lack of food. The food situation in the lowlands of Bale Zone is generally bleak and currently 144,800 people are under humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian action is needed to assist these migrants.

COMMUNITIES PLEAD FOR ANIMAL FEED-ANIMAL DEATHS EXPECTED TO SKYROCKET

The Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA) reports that the need for pasture and animal feed in western Afar is critical. People that had migrated from east to west Afar a few months back have been asked by clan elders of the western communities to return to their areas of origin. The request is motivated by the need to relieve the stress of animals in the west in hopes of a better chance of survival. It was then agreed that herds from the east would return during this period of extreme hardship to alleviate the pressure in the west even though the animals are likely returning to die. Unfortunately, the general lack of pasture at the end of the rainy season is increasing and animal deaths are expected to skyrocket.

COORDINATION MEETINGS ON THE EMERGENCY

There are currently many coordination meetings related to the emergency held on a regular basis, both within the Government and within the UN/Donor/NGO community. Within the Government, under the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee, the Crisis Management Group meets frequently. Under this are four weekly (or biweekly) sectoral Task Forces (Health, Water, Agriculture/Livestock and Food, the later under DPPC), hosted by each line ministry and bringing together NGOs and UN agencies involved in each sector. These report at the fortnightly Technical Information Management Exchange (TIME) meeting supported by the TIME Advisory Group (TAG) which meets as required. A monthly Donor Meeting is hosted by the DPPC Commissioner. DPPC meets with representatives of the regional DPPBs once a month. Within the UN community, agencies involved in emergency work meet on a weekly basis. NGOs meet as a group at regular Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) meetings, and in smaller groups to look at issues related to one zone or region, often including representatives from DPPC and the UN. At the regional and zonal level, several coordination forums have been set up for local administration, NGOs, WFP and other UN agencies. The regional governments have also set up Regional Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committees, with their own sectoral task forces. A WFP shipping and procurement coordination meeting has been re-established to look at contingency plans for handling very high levels of food aid imports in 2003, and to jointly manage with donor representatives the issues of local and regional purchases.

EMERGENCY HEALTH KITS ARRIVED

28 Emergency Health Kits (EHK), out of the 50 kits that WHO HQ has authorized from its own budget, have arrived and delivered to Ministry of Health on 26 October. According to the Ministry of Health, the distribution plan includes ten for Afar, six for Somali and eight for Oromia Region, leaving a balance of four in reserve. (One EHK can be used for 10,000 people for three months).