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PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY OF SOUTH OMO ZONE AND KONSO SPECIAL WEREDA IN SOUTH-WESTERN ETHIOPIA

1. INTRODUCTION

An EUE mission consisting of Ahmed Yusuf Farah, anthropologist/consultant, and field officers, Micheal Fritsche and Admassu H/Yesus, visited South Omo zone of the Southern Peoples Administrative Region. The field trip lasted one week starting 30 April 1995. This report contains the findings of this brief trip.

Heavy rainfall at the end of the main rainy season, which starts in February in Konso wereda and South Omo zone, shortened our initial two week schedule that was originally thought to allow sufficient time to visit all the weredas in the area. Torrential rains and the state of roads which are in disrepair necessitated shortening the trip to one week, during which time the mission visited Jinka and Konso towns, the capital towns of South Omo zone and Konso wereda respectively.

Although the field trip was brief and the information the mission collected can by no means be regarded to be comprehensive, no indication of stress was found in the disaster prone areas of South Omo zone and Konso wereda. Favourable rainfall in the main rainy season (February-June) has resulted in expectations of a good harvest in August or September, especially if current weather condition continue in May. This is crucial stage during which flowering sorghum and maize crops need sufficient moisture to mature.

2. ADMINISTRATION

The Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) is a federal entity comprised of the former regions: 8, 9, 10 and 11. It is located in south-western Ethiopia bordering Kenya and Sudan. The SNNPRS is currently divided into 11 zones, with four or five "special weredas" which do not harmoniously fit into the zones. The zones are:

<i>Zone</i>	<i>Capital</i>
1. Sidama	Awasa
2. Gedio	Dilla
3. South Omo	Jinka
4. North Omo	Arba Minch
5. Hadiya	Hosaina
6. Kambata/Alaba/Tembaro	Durame
7. Gurage	Wolkite
8. Bench	Mizan Teferi
9. Keffa	Bonga
10. Sheykicho	Masha
11. Maji	Maji

2.1 Konso wereda

Konso is one of the special weredas that are administered directly from Awassa, the regional capital. It is divided into 49 kebeles. The 1984 census stated the total number of ethnic Konso people in the wereda as 87,824. This figure is disputed by the wereda administration which see the census figure as an underestimation, and cites a current population of 180,000.

A report prepared by EUE in 1993 described disaster related features of Konso in the following terms: “One peculiarity of the Konso area is its frequent earthquakes. A recent strong tremor sent panic around the villages. Some hillside villages (one nicknamed New York) have slid as a result. Another danger is fire, in the crowded, stockaded villages full of wooden structures.”¹ No earthquakes occurred after 1993.

Two economic zones that are distinguished by differences of altitude and economic exploitation dominate the physical landscape of the wereda. These are semi-arid lowland areas supporting the majority of the population (between 60-70 percent); and agricultural uplands in the middle altitude supporting the rest of the primarily cultivating population.

2.2 South Omo zone

South Omo zone is relatively a large zone covering an area of 22,000 square kilometers. As in Konso wereda, its infrastructure is weak and for the most part non-existent; this is a disadvantage inherited from historical neglect of a typical marginal region.

The woefully underdeveloped South Omo zone is one of Ethiopian's socially most diverse zones. It contains a minimum of 12 different ethnic groups, and possibly as many as 21. Social diversity therefore compounds the existing problems of isolation, acute shortage of basic infrastructure as well as scarcity of professional and technical man-power. These endemic constraints together form daunting obstacles challenging the development of a viable regional administration that is crucial in the process of

¹ South Omo Field Trip Report, October 1993, Prepared by Ben Parker for United Nations Emergency Prevention and Preparedness Group in Ethiopia.

democratization and economic development. The following figures are given to show the relative size of the distinct groups in the zone and their wereda distribution:

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>Population 1984 census</i>	<i>Other names</i>	<i>Wereda</i>
Arbore	2,084		Hamar
Ari	107,764		Bako Gazar
Dassenech	17,545	Geleb, Mirele	Kuraz
Nayanyatom	5,477	Bume, Dongiro	Kuraz
Hamer	24,766		Hamer
Male	30,600		Bako Gazer, Hamer
Mursi	2,086		Salamago
Tsemai	8,223		Hamer

Other groups found in the zone and not mentioned in the census²:

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>Other names</i>	<i>Wereda</i>
Benna		Hamer
Karo		Hamer
Bodi		Salamago
Dimi		Salamago

Like other peripheral areas in the country, South Omo zone contains significant numbers of Amharas, Oromos and Tigreans in the towns. These highlanders dominate the limited trade linking such isolated centres to the relatively developed highland regions of the country.

Present administrative framework of South Omo zone

<i>Wereda</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Number of Kebeles</i>
Bako Gazer	Jinka	54
Salamago	Hanna	13
Kuraz	Omorate	46
Hamer	Dimeka	42

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Konso wereda

In Konso wereda, the mission held a productive discussion with the chairman of the wereda council and employees of the Bureau of Agriculture. They unanimously confirmed that agricultural production was exceptionally good in 1995. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that most of the rural population in the wereda retained enough supplies to sustain them until the next main harvest in August or September.

² Based on the EPPG report on South Omo, written by Ben Parker, 1993.

The price of the staples, sorghum and maize were lower in Konso than in Jinka, an indication of a better food security in Konso. The price of a quintal of maize in Konso village was Birr 80 at the beginning of May 1996, whereas a quintal of maize sold Birr 100 in the Jinka market during March, according to food price data obtained from the Bureau of Agriculture.

Crop production in Konso wereda

Sorghum and maize are subsistence crops in Konso wereda. Supplemented with root crops and pulses, these staple crops are intensively cultivated in elevated agricultural villages, and less intensively in the lowland agro-pastoral areas. Although some enterprising farmers try to maximize production by harvesting more than twice a year, the agricultural cycle is divided into two seasons. The first season (locally known as *fatana*) starts with the onset of the main rainy season, beginning in February and ending in June. Sorghum and maize are planted in both economic zones in the main agricultural season. Crops planted at the beginning of the main rains in February are harvested in August or September.

The second agricultural season commences with the onset of the small rains, locally known as *hagaya*, starting in November and continuing until December. Mainly grown in the wetter higher grounds, supplementary crops produced in the short rainy season include: wheat, teff, barley, millet, pulses, oil and root crops.

Outside trade and administrative centres, which contain a high proportion of highlanders whose staple diet is teff, sorghum and maize crops are staples for the rural population in Konso wereda. Thus, these food crops are essential for the survival and well-being of an overwhelming majority of population in the wereda. In prosperous years, settled farmers supplement the starch-rich diet of sorghum and maize with root crops and pulses that are mainly grown in the short season.

Protein nutrients that farmers need to consume in order to maintain a healthy life are mostly derived from locally produced pulses. For the majority of the primarily cultivating communities who are not able to produce cash crops such as coffee, minor crops grown in the short season, e.g. teff, are used as "exchange products" - teff is more expensive than other food crops.

The chairman of the Wereda Council and staff of the Bureau of Agriculture in Konso village have described the wereda as food deficit area, even in an average year. The major reasons given to explain this shortage are: 1) declining soil fertility; and 2) increasing population that place an ever-increasing pressure on the limited arable land.

Crop production statistics obtained from the bureaux of agriculture in Konso and Jinka towns confirm the low soil fertility attributed to Konso wereda. One hectare growing maize or sorghum under dry-farming condition in Konso yields half that of South Omo.

Crop yield per hectare in Konso wereda

Crop *Konso wereda*

	<i>Yield per hectare</i>
Maize	6
Sorghum	5
Millet	5
Wheat	4
Barley	4
Beans	6

Comprehensive terracing carried out by farmers in their small agricultural fields helps retain moisture and prevent fragile soil from being washed away by surface run-off. This agricultural tradition also vividly illustrates the sound ecological management attributed to the hardworking Konso people. Local initiatives used in order to increase food production without damaging the fragile agricultural land include: inter-cropping, diversification, terracing, and both spontaneous and externally assisted resettlement schemes along the banks of the rivers in the lowland areas involving ordinary farmers migrating from densely populated highland areas.

A few commercial enterprises have been developed at previous state farms and groups of farmers from the highland areas recently started to exploit irrigated agriculture along the banks of the rivers traversing lowland areas of the wereda. In spite of the increased food production such development entails, it needs to be undertaken carefully for good reasons. First, large-scale river-irrigation will be detrimental to agro-pastoralism by preventing access of livestock to prime dry season grazing. Second, without ensuring active and full participation of the local land-holding agro-pastoralists, development of irrigation agriculture by highlanders and wealthy individuals will most probably lead to conflict between low-landers and outsiders.

Progress of the main season in Konso

Climatic conditions, a crucial factor in determining food production in an average year, have so far been favourable. In Konso, the main rainy season (*fatana*), on which cultivation of food crops of maize and sorghum greatly depends, has started on time and sufficient rain has continued throughout most of the wereda. Healthy sorghum and maize crops observed by the team in the intensively farmed and skillfully terraced farms along road between Konso and Jinka corroborates the generous rainfall in Konso wereda so far this year.

In spite of the favourable conditions thus far, the council chairman and staff of the Bureau of Agriculture were cautiously optimistic about a bumper harvest in the main agricultural season. Success or failure of the staple crops in the main season is said to depend ultimately on enough moisture in the crucial month of May. Sufficient moisture at this time is necessary for flowering sorghum and maize to mature. Unfortunately, shortage or failure of rains is usual during this critical month in the agricultural cycle. This implies that although there are good grounds for optimism, an accurate picture can only be obtained at the end of May. If rainfall continues uninterrupted in May, and given there is no major devastation, Konso wereda will most likely record a good harvest as in the previous year.

Two minor problems with implications on crop production were reported by employees of the Bureau of Agriculture in Konso. The first is the reported armyworm outbreak in one kebele. The second is unconfirmed damage to terracing and crops affecting a small locality in the lowlands as a result of floods. Staff of the Bureau of Agriculture informed the mission that although they are currently well equipped with equipment and chemicals to control the armyworm outbreak, the damage done by flooding will certainly take time to reverse; nevertheless, the destruction seems to be limited in extent.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Bureau for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (DPP) were previously implementing food for work projects throughout the wereda, which was divided into two areas for this purpose. Food aid delivered by these organisations to their respective domains supported development projects such as rural road construction, terracing, development or protection of ponds and springs, and afforestation. LWF is still providing food aid for development efforts in 24 kebeles, whereas DPPC has ceased food assistance to the remaining 25 kebeles in its area of influence. Even though food shortage may be the reason, cessation of assistance to one group of beneficiaries seems to have not only affected development work in one part of the wereda, it has also generated envy and ill-feeling between recipients and non-recipients.

3.2 South Omo zone

The mission was not able to travel to the remote weredas of South Omo zone due to the inaccessibility of roads as a result of heavy rainfall. Therefore, information relating to this zone was collected from line ministries and the Bureau of DPP in the capital, Jinka. Lack of transport has totally paralyzed Bureau of DPP staff, who are not able to work in the weredas. Set up four years ago in Jinka, the Bureau of DPP is no able to regularly visit the weredas and therefore all its 43 employees live and work in Jinka town.

The Bureau of Agriculture is also seriously hampered by transport problems. Even though this bureau has offices in lowland agro-pastoral weredas, the work of its employees is concentrated in the surrounding Bako Gazer wereda, in which they are more present than the remote lowland agro-pastoral weredas. The wereda offices of the Bureau of Agriculture and grassroots committees existing at the wereda level form a communication bridge between agro-pastoralists and the zonal administration in Jinka.

An assessment of the food security situation in South Omo zone carried out by the Bureau of Agriculture in December 1995 identified 52,000 people in need of food assistance. To alleviate this food shortage, an assistance package consisting of 80% food for work and 20% free distribution was recommended. The following table illustrates the wereda distribution of the population claimed to be food deficit in South Omo zone at the end of last year. It is notable that identified vulnerable groups are all found in the semi-arid lowland agro-pastoral weredas of the zone that are more susceptible to drought and collateral food shortage.

<i>Wereda</i>	<i>No. of persons in need of food assistance</i>
1. Kuraz	18,000
2. Salamago	8,000
3. Hamar Bena	26,000

Until now no action has been taken to alleviate the reported food deficit. Paradoxically, no known severe malnutrition/starvation linked to alleged food shortages has been reported in the impacted weredas. This implies that people identified as food deficient are somehow managing to support themselves without external assistance; otherwise, the assessment may have misjudged the situation.

The period preceding the harvest of staples in August or September is the hungry or lean period for the agro-pastoralists in the lowland parts of Konso and South Omo zone - a period when food reserves from the previous year tend to diminish or get exhausted. Therefore, the absence of actual starvation at this time of the year is indicative that production of staples in 1995 was satisfactory in the zone, if not exceptionally good as noted in the neighbouring Konso wereda.

According to data obtained from the Bureau of Agriculture relating to food prices in Jinka market, it can be assessed that there has been a remarkable improvement in access to food in comparison to the hungry months of July and August 1994, when the price of maize reached a high of Birr 230 per quintal. In September 1995 prices dropped to Birr 170, falling to Birr 35 after the harvest in October. Prices continued to be below Birr 60 in the last months of 1995 and the first months of 1996, when they increased dramatically. In January 1996 the price jumped to Birr 175 from 75 in February, and dropping to Birr 100 in March 1996. Most likely this latest decrease was due to the expected good harvest in the main cropping season in South Omo, due in August or September.

Crop production in South Omo zone

The local economy of the South Omo zone shows remarkable similarities to that of Konso wereda. The physical landscape of the zone, like that of Konso wereda, consists of two distinct zones differing in terms of economic exploitation and elevation above sea level. These are lowland agro-pastoral areas and settled farming areas found in middle altitude. Bako Gazar wereda, around the zonal capital of Jinka, is located in the intensively cultivated highland areas of the zone, while the remaining three weredas are largely situated in lowland agro-pastoral areas.

Elevated grounds that are intensively farmed in Konso wereda and in South Omo zone, can be said to mark the south-western limits of traditional highland ox-plough agriculture. Outside these settled and primarily cultivating areas extend vast semi-arid terrain supporting agro-pastoral groups that are at various stages of transition from nomadism to sedentary livelihoods.

As in Konso wereda, the agricultural cycle in South Omo zone is divided into two seasons coinciding with the two annual rainy seasons. Planting of sorghum and maize starts with the onset of the main rainy season (February - June). Staple crops planted in February are harvested in August or September.

Crop yield per hectare in South Omo zone

Crop *South Omo zone*

	<i>Yield per hectare</i>
Maize	12
Sorghum	10
Millet	6
Wheat	7
Barley	7
Tee	4
Beans	8

The secondary agricultural season commences with the onset of the short rainy season that starts in November and ends in December. Supplementary crops produced in the zone during this period, mainly in the higher altitudes, include: sorghum, millet, wheat, barley, teff, pulses, etc.

To satisfy a pressing need or to organise a ceremony, among other purposes, a peasant or agro-pastoralist may sometimes sell his surplus sorghum or maize, or even a portion of the family's staple food reserve. Nonetheless, sorghum and maize are essentially grown to satisfy subsistence need of the family, and their importance in the subsistence sphere is more important than their market value.

Given the difficulty in raising livestock in the intensively cultivated agricultural wereda of Bako Gazer, peasants there produce pulses that diversify and enrich the traditional diet made of sorghum or maize, a diet which is deficient in protein nutrients. This peasant economy in the highland areas produces varied crops some of which, e.g. teff, have more market value than the staple crops. Some farmers also produce cash crops such as coffee.

Compared to primarily cultivating highland areas in Konso wereda, the farming Bako Gazer wereda in South Omo zone appears more fertile and less densely populated. Nevertheless, crop production there also faces constraints that are similar to those affecting cultivated areas in Konso wereda.

Progress of the main season in South Omo

The variable quantity of annual rainfall and its distribution and timing, in a given season and over several seasons, is an important factor in determining food and livestock production in the zone. South Omo zone fortunately benefitted from fairly distributed and sufficient moisture during the main rainy season that started in February. The plump cattle the team observed on the route to Jinka, and the healthy sorghum and maize crops growing in the fields, all confirm the good weather conditions.

So far this year the problem affecting agricultural production is not the usual shortage or failure of rains, but rather too much of it. As reported in Konso wereda, flooding damaged some irrigation infrastructure in a particular lowland area. In South Omo, rains started earlier than expected, making the fields muddy and delaying timely planting of sorghum and maize. This delayed planting, however, appears to have been compensated with regular rains since February.

Other than a complete failure of rains in May, South Omo zone is likely to realize a good harvest in the main agricultural season. As is the case in Konso wereda, sufficient moisture for the ripening of flowering sorghum and maize crops is vital during May if a successful harvest is to be derived.

4. AGRO-PASTORALISTS

4.1 The Agro-pastoral economy in the lowlands of South Omo zone and Konso wereda

The lowland areas in South Omo zone and Konso wereda support agro-pastoral groups practicing a mixed economy - herding supplemented with cultivation. The primary stock raised there is cattle and supplementary flocks of sheep and goats. Despite increasing dependence on cultivation by previously nomadic groups in the lowlands of south-western Ethiopia, these agro-pastoralists are still stereotyped by highlanders and government officials as seasonally migrating nomadic people. The following description of the Mursi group by an anthropologist who studied this society for a long time clearly illustrates the importance of cultivation to this group, in particular, and to other groups found in the arid lowlands of South Omo and Konso wereda, in general.

David Turtom wrote³:

The Mursi live in the Lower Omo Valley, about 100 kilometers north of the border between Ethiopia and Kenya. Having no permanently occupied 'villages' they are classified by the people of the surrounding highlands and by the local administration as 'nomads' who spend their time, as one administrator put it to me, 'walking, walking, walking, holding the tails of their cattle. In fact their seasonal movements are highly regular, limited in geographical extent and predictable. Nor are they, in an objective sense, 'pastoralists', if this term means the provision of the household's main food requirement from herding. With only about one head of cattle per head of population they depend for well over half their subsistence needs on cultivation.

Of the more than a dozen distinct agro-pastoral groups found in the semi-arid lowlands in south-western Ethiopia, some possess more cattle than the livestock-impooverished Mursi. Nevertheless, it is clear that most of these agro-pastoral groups depend, to varying degrees, on cultivation; cattle are still regarded as the most important material possession. Rain-fed shifting cultivation is widely practiced in this agro-pastoral lowland areas. In addition, crops are also cultivated along the banks of the river which flood seasonally. The Mursi in the lower Omo valley cultivate the banks of this river, and practice shifting cultivation. Thus, the Mursi and others harvest two times a year - once from shifting cultivation depending on the main rains (February to June), and once on flood recessions along the banks of Omo river (seasonally flooded by rain in its catchment area, at an elevation over 1500 meters).

³ David Turton (1992); Migrants and Refugees: A Mursi Case Study. A Paper Presented to the United Nations Institute for Social Development Symposium for the Horn of Africa on Mass Voluntary Return Movements of Refugees, Addis Ababa, 15-17 September 1992.

Erratic rainfall constrains the use of semi-arid lowlands for regular and reliable cropping. Rainfall in these areas is both uncertain and limited as compared to wetter cultivating highland areas. It is such a pattern that exposes agro-pastoralists to famine and drought.

Increasing pressure on available agricultural land as a result of population increase prolongs use of land initially cleared for shifting cultivation. In effect, this shortens fallow period and causes loss of soil fertility and environment degradation in a fragile ecosystem that is marginally suitable for regular cropping but is ideal for grazing. Disparity between the rapidly growing population and finite production base exacerbates existing vulnerability emanating from unreliable weather condition.

Flood recession agriculture along the banks of the seasonally flooded rivers is certainly more reliable than rain-fed shifting cultivation. However, this system of production is limited in extent and contributes little to the overall subsistence need of the local agro-pastoral groups. Shifting cultivation, the main crop producing activity in the lowlands is also constrained by the fact that it may not sustain an increasing population over a period of time under the prevailing circumstances.

The primary activities of herding and cultivation are supplemented with collecting leaves and berries as well as hunting wild game. Hunting and gathering is resorted to during lean or distress years, when vulnerable agro-pastoralism fails to sustain local groups living in disaster affected lowland areas of South Omo zone and Konso wereda. Game animals, abundant in the past, have become drastically reduced in the last three decades by unrestrained ruthless local hunting made possible by easy access to deadly automatic weapons.

Explaining the paramount importance of cherished cattle to the Mursi agro-pastoralists, David Turton noted:

Cattle, the most valued material possessions of the Mursi, make an important contribution to the daily subsistence of certain categories of the population (mainly children and young men) at certain times of the year, but their prime importance to the economy as a whole is an insurance against crop failure, when they may be exchanged for grain in highland villages.

A mixture of blood and milk derived from cattle is consumed by young men and children attending cattle in a grazing region away from the nuclear family which contains the rest of the family. Other members staying with the nuclear agro-pastoral family mainly subsist on grains harvested from the family field. When sufficient grass and water are made available by the seasonal rains near the agricultural land, it becomes possible for the family to unite and enjoy the livestock products and grain.

One of the problems affecting the mixed economy in the lowlands is encroachment of cultivation into the range lands. This occurs in two ways. First, made inevitable by demographic growth, is the fact that local agro-pastoralists are producing crops in agriculturally marginal areas that are more suitable for grazing. Second, is the

development of irrigated agriculture along the banks of perennial rivers by private enterprises and enterprising highlanders, which reduces available land for grazing.

In addition to cyclic drought, agro-pastoralism in the semi-arid lowland areas is menaced by periodic outbreak of epidemics that affect livestock. The Tse tse fly infestation along the banks of the main rivers, i.e. the Omo, which provide pasture in the dry season when grass and water elsewhere become scarce, adds to the plight of local agro-pastoralists.

4.2 Livestock

In both Konso wereda and South Omo zone, abundant rains were also good for agro-pastoralists rearing primary stocks of cattle and small flocks of sheep and goats. However, livestock is not raised in the intensively cultivated and densely populated agricultural villages in the highland areas of Konso wereda other than as beasts of burden and draft oxen. Therefore, consumption of animal protein is a relish that only rich people can afford.

The heavy rains in the main rainy season brought abundant grazing and water, basic resources that are essential for animal husbandry in the dry lowlands where such resources are often scarce. Nevertheless, an outbreak of epidermal skin disease (mange) and CCDP in Hammar wereda was reported to the Ministry of Agriculture in Jinka during the trip. The ministry was unable to send a veterinary team to investigate the outbreak due to lack of transport. The affected wereda is said to have 7 veterinary clinics. It appears, that it can not deal with the problem on its own without external assistance, given the fact that the clinics are staffed with sufficient number of technicians but are short of veterinary assistants. Reported shortage of veterinary drugs could also undermine the effort of the affected wereda to combat the diseases.

4.3 Social instability

Environmental crisis and linked economic problems affecting agro-pastoralist groups living in underdeveloped lowland areas are compounded by devastating inter-clan warfare pervading in recent times (1980s and 1990s). The causes of this disruptive turmoil affecting various groups living in one of Ethiopia's most socially diverse regions are multi-dimensional. One important factor underlying increased instability is certainly rooted in the struggle for survival between different and often antagonistic agro-pastoral groups competing for access to scarce resources. Proliferation of automatic weapons and instability affecting border areas of the neighbouring countries (Kenya and Sudan) frequented by the same groups contributed to the escalation of inter-clan fighting. State authority and power was also limited, as it is still today, in these unstable peripheral agro-pastoral lowland areas.

It is beyond the scope of this report to examine in detail the social dimension of the crisis which recently affected South Omo zone and Konso wereda. Nonetheless, it is important to state that stability and peace have started to return gradually to the Ethiopian side of the border since the change of government in the middle of 1991. However, instability still affecting linked areas across international borders in

neighbouring Kenya and Sudan impedes return of comprehensive normality to war-ravaged peripheral border areas.

5. OTHER ISSUES

5.1 Health

The zonal medical health doctor in Jinka reported a recent outbreak of meningitis in lowland weredas of the zone. The epidemic was reported to have affected about 26 patients. The effort of the health staff to control the disease has fortunately been assisted by torrential rains in the affected areas, thus diminishing conditions favourable for the spread of meningitis.

The most important development in the area of health is ongoing construction of the first hospital in the zone, in Jinka. This is actually a health centre being upgraded to rural hospital with funds from the capital budget for regional development. Nevertheless, the zonal doctor stated his determination to transform the facility to a referral hospital for the zone. To achieve this ambition, medical equipment for 80-120 bed hospital are expected to be obtained from abroad with the assistance of Swedish Philadelphia Church Mission (SPCM) and the Society of International Missionaries (SIM). This will be the first hospital of its kind in the zone that is able to dispense essential medical services still sought from the nearest hospital at Arba Minch.

5.2 Infrastructure

The weak and limited infrastructure is prevalent in South Omo zone and Konso wereda. There are no communication facilities connecting Jinka to wereda centres of the zone, although it is vertically linked to Awassa, the regional capital. This limited of infrastructure not only prevents effective integration and interaction between isolated areas of South Omo zone and Konso wereda from the rest of the county, but also creates logistic problems that could hinder or delay provision of humanitarian assistance at times of emergency.

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