

HIGHLIGHTS

Focus on HIV/AIDS

Today, close to 9 % of the sexually active adult population in Ethiopia are infected with AIDS.

Crop Pests

The Ministry of Agriculture using DLCO-EA Aircraft continued a quelea control operation on some 8.7 million birds. Sorghum chaffer control operation was also carried out on 19,500 hectares of crop and non crop plants.

Afar Region

Although 2001 seems to be a good year so far, Afar pastoralists remain vulnerable for various reasons.

Somali Region

Drought conditions continue in Warder and other parts of southern Somali region, while the *Karan/Kiremt* rains, which affect only northern parts of the region, appear to be setting in.

10,000 Surrounded by Water

Over 10,000 people have been surrounded by water in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' State after the Omo River burst its banks, inundating five neighborhood towns in the area. According to the South Omo Zone council, five people and 300 livestock have been washed away by the flood and over 3,000 residents of Duba, Beire and Diraji towns should urgently be evacuated by helicopter. Similarly, the flood caused by the over flowing of Tekeze River had displaced over 2,500 residents of Humera town in East Tigray zone.



15 August 2001

NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS

DPPC, USAID Sign 16 Million US \$ Agreement

The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) and USAID signed a joint agreement to "Mitigate the Efforts of Disaster" on 3 August. The agreement will run for six years with the USAID budget of 13.5 million dollars, aiming at strengthening Ethiopia's capacity to reduce chronic food insecurity by improving the country's capacity to predict and respond to disasters. Similarly, they have also signed a 2.4 million US \$ agreement on 27 July to support the various development activities being undertaken by World Vision, Care-Ethiopia, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Relief Society of Tigray and Catholic Relief Organization, among others. In addition, the United States had this year offered 250,000 mts of relief grain in response to appeals made by the Commission.

Food Pipeline

Based on the DPPC January Appeal with net requirements of 385,586 mts cereals, the global cereal requirements have now been met following the recent signing of an agreement between DPPC and EU for 110,000 mts. Of this, 40,000 mts will be distributed during August and September, while the DPPC is discussing the most appropriate way of using the balance of 70,000 mts through EGS with its regional counterparts. In addition, the EU announced a pledge of 25,000 mts cereals towards NGO operations.

Despite this positive response to the DPPC Appeal, a global pipeline break is forecast for September. Following the recent pastoral and *belg* assessments, and the probability of beneficiary numbers increasing by approximately 2 million people between August and December, there are not sufficient cereal stocks in the pipeline to meet needs to end September, based on a ration of 15 kg per person per month. Even using the reduced ration of 12.5 kg, there will barely be sufficient stocks to cover September requirements. However, priority is being given to areas most badly affected, for which cereals have been reserved to meet needs until at least end September.

With regard to the WFP pipeline for EMOP 10030, which made provision for some of these increased needs, a pipeline break is also expected in September, as only one new pledge has been recently received (cash pledge from Germany). There is currently a shortfall of over 100,000 mts cereals against the EMOP.

The situation regarding supplementary food, vegetable oil and pulses continues to be of particular concern, with minimal pledges received to date for these commodities.

2.8bn US \$ for Life

Prolonging Drugs

Drug Administration and Control Authority says 2.8bn US \$ is needed annually to import HIV/AIDS life prolonging drugs to be used by 400,000 HIV/AIDS patients and people living with the virus.

UNMEE Officially Reopens Bridge

United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE's) Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Ian Martin, officially reopened the bridge that crosses the Mereb River between the towns of Rama, in Ethiopia, and Adi Quala, in Eritrea. Mr. Martin stated that the bridge would help UNMEE carry out its monitoring duties in the area and be used for free movement of people of the two countries in the future.

ICRC Repatriates 315 Ethiopians

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) carried out the repatriation of 315 persons of Ethiopian origin from Eritrea on 27 July. According to the press release the repatriation had taken place between the towns of Adi Quala and Rama with the Mereb river as the crossing point.

Seventh and Eighth MCC Meetings Held in Nairobi

The seventh and eighth meeting of Ethiopia and Eritrea Military Coordination Commission (MCC) were held on 27 June and 8 August respectively in Nairobi. The meetings were attended by senior military officials from Ethiopia and Eritrea, representatives of OAU and the United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). The meetings discussed the formation of sub-committees of the MCC, collecting bodies of dead soldiers, free movement of UN peacekeeping soldiers and confidence building measures to reduce tensions and facilitate the return of IDPs to their homes of origin on either side of the southern boundary. Regarding the formation of sector MCCs, the Ethiopian delegate confirmed Ethiopia's willingness while the Eritrean delegation said it was premature. On 9 August the SRSG, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, and the force commander, Patrick Cammaert, held a joint press conference about the 8th MCC meeting at the Mereb river.

ECHO Contributed 1.5 Million Euro for Voluntary Repatriation

European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has announced a contribution of 1.5 million Euro for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Ethiopia to areas in North-western Somalia. This contribution will go a long way towards supporting the repatriation movement. In June 2001, UNHCR closed two camps, namely Tefreri Ber and Darwanaji, after 22,524 refugees returned to their home areas in North-west Somalia and 3,664 dispersed within Somali National Regional State. Subsequent to this repatriation, another 43,806 Somalis are expected to repatriate from Daror, Rabasso, and Aisha refugee camps in the East. Daror camp is set to close in December this year. At the beginning of 2002, UNHCR estimates that there will be some 50,000 Somali refugees remaining in Eastern Ethiopia of whom approximately 35,000 are expected to repatriate by the end of June 2002. The remaining 15,000 from Southern Somalia would be consolidated into a small number of camps. The total number of Somali refugees repatriated as of 31 July 2001 was 24,511 plus 3,664 Ethiopian nationals (of ethnic Somali origin) dispersed from the refugee camps, giving a cumulative total of 28,175.

SCF/UK Conducted a Workshop on Regional Early Warning and Food Security in SNRS

A one-day workshop on regional early warning and food security was held in Jijiga on 4 July 2001. The objective was to establish the steering committee of the Early Warning and Food Security Project for the SNRS and to discuss the Terms of Reference (ToR). The project, which is funded by USAID and the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Union/ECHO, is executed by SCF/UK. Participants were drawn from relevant local government departments, NGOs operating in the SNRS and the UN including FAO/OCHA. A follow-up meeting was also held on 10 July 2001 during which the Steering Committee comprising 14 agencies was formed. The UNDP-EUE, WFP and UNICEF have been elected as permanent members to ensure the smooth implementation of the project in developing regional capabilities in early warning that is capable of predicting changes in food security and provide sufficient lead time for emergency response. The Steering Committee meets once a month. The next meeting is scheduled for 14 August 2001.

During the workshop, UN-EUE, following discussions with the DPPB, requested NGOs, international organizations and UN agencies operating in the SNRS and regional bureaus to share information with the DPPB and UN-EUE on their future and/or ongoing activities with regard to the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of drought displaced IDPs in the SNRS and activities in general so as to demonstrate the level of current investment in the region and identify activities that will contribute to finding a durable solution to the IDP problems in the SNRS.



Quelea Bird
(*Quelea quelea L.*)



Sorghum Chafer
(*Pachnoda interrupta*)

AGRICULTURE

Millions of Quelea Quelea Birds Destroyed

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) using DLCO-EA Aircraft continued a quelea control operation starting 5 July 2001 over roosts and colonies around Konso and Derashe Special weredas in SNNP region and Teltele wereda in Oromia region. Arial spraying was carried out on 313 hectares using 625 liters of pesticides on some 8.7 million birds and the result as of 17 July 2001 was 98% had been exterminated. Ground support was provided by the staff of the MoA. Increasing populations of quelea birds are expected in the coming months in the rift valley areas.

The quelea birds move in large flocks, even up to a million birds, causing great damage to sorghum, teff, wheat, barley and millet crops. Each quelea bird eats between three and four grams a day and can cause the loss of another six grams that falls on the ground while eating.

Sorghum Chaffer Observed in Amhara Region

According to a report of the Ministry of Agriculture, infestation of the sorghum chaffer has been observed on crops and bushes starting early June 2001 and as of 5 July 2001 had been reported in four zones, 14 weredas and 111 Peasant Associations (PAs) in Amhara region. Chemicals and cultural methods have been used to control the pest on 49 hectares of crop areas and 17,280 hectares of non-crop plants. During the same period in the month of June 2001, a similar infestation was also observed in two zones in Oromia region as well as in Dire Dawa Administration. In total, control operations were carried out as of 5 July 2001 in Amhara and Oromia regions and near Dire Dawa in 19 weredas in 133 (PAs) and on 19,500 hectares of crop and non crop plants.

The sorghum chafer, *Pachnoda interrupta*, lays its eggs on the ground where hatching larvae consume cattle dung and decaying organic matter. After pupating in the soil, dark brown to black beetles with red and yellow spots emerge and consume the developing grain of sorghum and millet at the milky stage.

Emergency Agricultural Input Supply

The implementation by FAO/TCOR of a Dutch funded project on IDPs in Tigray and Afar regional states have been underway for the last seven months. Over the months several activities have been carried out, including:

- purchase and distribution of seeds is largely completed;
- the tender process for the supply and distribution of 80,000 pcs of hand tools is underway;
- fertilizer purchase is done locally and under way;
- 600 oxen were bought and distributed to the most needy farmers;
- 600 local ploughs and accessories have been bought and distributed
- purchase orders have been placed with supplies for the delivery of veterinary drugs, vaccines and equipment for both Tigray and Afar regions;
- the purchase and distribution of sheep and goats has been initiated in Tigray region. It is anticipated that the purchase of small ruminants in Afar region will start in mid August.

RELIEF FOOD AND LOGISTICS

Short Haul Trucks Extended for Additional Months

The WFP-contracted short haul trucks have been extended for additional two months (July and August 2001) to deliver approximately 5,812 mts/month mainly in the Somali Region. The air-bridge Special Operations (SO) with a WFP-contracted small plane to Somali region and the Djibouti road rehabilitation project SO 6243 are both extended through October 2001.

Various security incidents have been affecting the activity of the short-haul trucks in Somali region, especially in Fik zone, and investigations are on-going with the military and local administration in the areas where the incidents took place.

Emergency Food Security Reserve

The current Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) uncommitted stocks are at relatively high level. Should any new pledges be committed against the DPPC Appeal, it will be possible to borrow from the EFSR for immediate distribution.

FAO/TCOR is also undertaking preparatory work to launch emergency seed assistance for drought-affected people in the Amhara region using US\$ 363,636 recently obtained from the government of Sweden. The project is intended to assist some 18, 000 farmers in north Shewa, Oromiya, South and North Wollo and Wag Hamra zones, in Amhara region. According to the project document, each farmer will be provided with seed sufficient to cover the seed needs for 0.5 hectare of land. The project will distribute up to 520 tones of cereals and pulses crops seeds. More over, the project will distribute some vegetable seeds and render small-scale irrigation support.

Belg Production Improving (FEWS and EU LFSU - monthly Report)

Teams from the National Belg Pre-Harvest Needs Assessment completed their work by mid-July and preliminary findings indicate prospects for improved production over the past several years.

Though only 50-70 percent of potential *belg* areas were cultivated, production this year is expected to be greater than it was for the past six years. The last good harvest was in 1998, when *belg* cereal production was 728,028 mts. Production estimates for this year will be released next month following a compilation of the assessment findings.

Short-cycle cereals have also done well in the country except for some lowland, marginal areas where poorly distributed rainfall reduced production or heavy rainfall and hailstorms destroyed crops completely. In the mid and highlands of South Tigray, Amhara, Arsi and Bale, production prospects exceed expectations. Farmers in these areas are currently harvesting or will soon harvest barley and other short-term maturing cereals. In the lowlands of Bale and East Hararghe Zones - areas bordering Somali region - where farmers traditionally cultivate maize and sorghum during the *belg* rains, late onset and early termination destroyed the crop. This is also true for the lowlands of South Tigray and Kobo wereda in North Wollo, which is not very surprising as these areas are agro-pastoral and rainfall is not very reliable.

Good Start to Meher Production

Well-distributed *belg* rains have extended into the *kiremt* rains (*meher* cultivation period) In the major maize belt of the country, including East Shewa and Western Oromiya zones, where most farmers planted maize. The crop has reached the vegetative stage and is in good condition. If the current rainfall pattern continues, as predicted by the National Meteorological Service Agency, a good maize harvest will be expected. Other cereals, such as teff and wheat, have also been extensively planted.

While *meher* production is expected to be good, the bridging of the *belg* and *meher* season's rain may foster weed infestation and hamper land preparation in some locations - this is especially true for the central and western half of the country. *Belg* rains normally break from mid-May to late June, during which *belg* crop is harvested. While the extension of the *belg* rains were desirable this year due to the late start of the season, it reduced the possibility of harrowing, which is important to avoid weed infestation in cereal crops like barley and wheat. Harrowing allows farmers to plough their fields several times before planting to reduce the chance of weed infestation.

WEATHER

Update on Rainfall (*MoA's Monthly Flash*)

Information from most *meher* producing areas indicates that the *Kiremt* rains started on time with good and beneficial distribution for agricultural activities.

Karan rains (which fall only in northern Somali region) have started in the northern tip of Somali region. This rain is very important in the pastoral areas for regeneration of pasture and water. The performance of the last *Gu* season (March to May) was below average, especially in the southern lowland areas.

On the other hand, shortage or late onset of rain was reported in various parts of the country including the lowlands of East and West Hararghe zone (Darolebu, Boke, Mesela, Doba and Meiso weredas in West Hararghe zone, Babile, Gursum, Fedis, Golo Oda and part of Girawa wereda in East Hararghe zone) and Wag Hamra zones. These areas are already areas of concern due to poor performance of the last year's *meher* season and therefore require close monitoring.

However, good rains were recorded on 1 and 2 August, when 130 mm were registered in Jijiga, and 20 mm in Gode. These rains extended up to Rabasso and in Harshin could be estimated at about half the precipitation in Jijiga. On 7 August further good rains were mentioned in Aware and Gashamo weredas. These rains tend to confirm the return to normal rainfall patterns and a sufficient growth of pastures to last up to the next *deyr* rains in the concerned areas, if they set on in normal time.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Practical Training on Treatment of Severe Malnutrition

An 8-day training on the Treatment of Severe Malnutrition, organized by the Somali Regional Health Bureau, in collaboration with UNICEF and ACF, was concluded in Hartisheik Therapeutic Feeding Center (TFC) on 3 July.

The training followed a workshop, held in Jijiga in May, on standardization of protocols and aimed at applying standards to the work of health staff. Fifteen health professionals from Karramara Hospital, Kebribeyah Health Centers and Hartisheik Clinic participated in the training.

In continuation of the expansion of the nutrition surveillance programme in Somali region, a UNICEF nutrition consultant is currently assigned to Gode to work closely with the zonal health department and support the planning and undertaking of nutrition surveys that will be conducted in collaboration with SC-US in Gode and Harghelle, Afder zone.

Therapeutic Feeding Center in Hartisheik

The TFC in Hartishek, run by Mother and Child Development Organization (MCDO), was initially set up with the technical support of ACF and the technical support and limited funding from UNICEF. UNICEF has continued providing support to the center, while MCDO is looking for additional sources of funding. Since its opening on 1 June, the center has admitted a total of 68 children. Currently there are 37 children in the TFC, as several have been discharged for having achieved improved W/L levels. While MCDO is in the process of preparing an agreement for the tankering of water with a local contractor, Administration for Refugees and Refugees (ARRA) is temporarily providing assistance by bringing water to the center.

MCDO is seeking funds and supplementary foods to start a take-home supplementary distribution of rations that would greatly improve the overall situation of malnutrition in children and particularly minimize or eliminate relapses by children discharged by the TFC.

Fafan IDPs

MCDO continues to distribute weekly supplementary rations to 137 children living in Fafan IDP settlements and surrounding local communities. The discharge rate remains low (total 4 children) as a result of irregular food distributions and insufficient access to health services. An MCDO nurse has reported that there has been a high incidence of malaria among IDPs screened for medical problems. Respiratory infection and pneumonia cases have also been reported. The supplementary food distribution was resumed in late May after a joint UNICEF/RHB team observed high malnutrition levels amongst IDPs. The SFC was initially planned to be opened for 3 months, and to date both CSB and oil are urgently needed.

Micro-planning for NID and Measles/Vitamin A campaign

With UNICEF support, the Somali Regional Health Bureau continued working on the micro-planning of National Immunization Day (NID) and the measles/Vitamin A campaign for Somali region. In a week-long workshop held on first week of July, at Jijiga Nursing School, zonal and regional health staff and UNICEF have been preparing for the measles campaign that is planned for Somali region in September and for the NIDs that are planned to start in November 2001. WHO will be providing technical support for the measles campaign and take the lead in the organization and management of the NIDs.

FOCUS SERIES

I) FOCUS ON PASTORAL AREAS: Somali and Afar

Somali Region

Overview

Drought conditions continue in Warder and other parts of southern Somali region, while the *Karan/Kiremt* rains, which affect only northern parts of the region, appear to be setting in. Heavy rain fell in Jijiga in the first days of August, and has continued falling, good rain is reported in eastern Degehbou, and heavy rain has covered many parts of Shinile.

In the southern zones, the *haga* (dry season leading up to the *deyr* rains in October/ November) is advancing with increasingly desiccating wind and dust. Unusually early migration of livestock began in June in the areas of the south, which received poor or negligible *gu* rains, with deteriorating pasture and water reported in many areas, the movement of livestock within the region continues. The situation in Warder zone is particularly worrisome. Water is the priority need, and many livestock, particularly camel, have been moved out of the zone. Other areas of special concern are southern parts of Liben and Afder zones, especially the Dolo Odo/Dolo Bay area, and some parts of Gode zone, such as Denan and Goudis. Areas where migrating animals and people are congregating are under pressure for scarce resources of pasture and water, and are being monitored carefully in case the situation at these locations deteriorates.

In addition, the Livestock Working Group, chaired by FAO/ORHC, is examining the possibilities of early pilot interventions to reduce the impact of losing animals to drought while offering emergency veterinary care to enhance the possibility of extending the lives of animals facing grazing resources of poor nutritional value.

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At the same time, the pilot activities could transition into longer-term emergency prevention and preparedness programmes. A major problem in Warder zone is the shortage of banknotes due to the lack of sales of livestock and the difficulties for pastoralists to access food and other goods present on the markets as they cannot find cash money any more in exchange of their livestock. A rational de-stocking intervention would allow, besides its effects of reducing the pressure on grazing land, to inject cash into the local economy.

No major changes are reported in the situation in Fik zone and most of Degebour zone. Food distributions continue throughout the region. A quote recorded by the WFP monitor in Shinile zone sums up the situation in much of the region: "Regarding relief food... the beneficiaries gave a local name 'Soo Gaadh' for this relief food. The literally meaning of this name is 'rescue or reaching'. The main reason for using this name is that the beneficiaries believe the relief food has not only saved their lives, but also has kept their major sources of income, the livestock, from being sold prematurely to purchase food."

WFP-contracted short-haul trucks are currently covering deliveries in Gode, Warder and Fik zones and parts of Afder zone. The trucks are encountering security problems in Fik zone, where in a recent land-mine explosion on the main road, one of the drivers delivering food aid was killed.

The following are more details on conditions in areas being closely monitored:

Warder

There is serious concern about the critical water problems in Warder zone, where the *gu* rains were insufficient this year, resulting in the drying up of *birkas* (underground water cisterns built out of concrete to collect rain water) and shallow wells in the zone. The lack of water and pasture has forced the people to migrate with their livestock on a magnitude which is unusual and at a time earlier than normal. Livestock herders have moved with their camels out of Warder zone to Shilabo woreda in Koraha zone and Gashamo woreda in Degebour zone. Cross-border movements of animals from western Puntland and Somalia into Warder have also been reported.

Emaciated cattle can be observed around borehole and shallow well areas of Warder zone, i.e. Warder, Geladi, Boh, Wel-wel and others. Camel, sheep and goats are still in satisfactory condition but if the drought persists, they may also face a similar fate in a few weeks time.

The early migration is not limited to livestock and their herders but also includes their families. Women, children and the elderly who are left behind while the men moved with their herds are found around water points including the woreda capital towns of Warder zone (Warder, Danot, Boh and Geladin). Two recent missions (FAO, OWS, WFP and UN-EUE) driving in the area observed that some settlements had been partly or completely abandoned. Even in the towns, most of the *birkas* have dried up. The majority of the people depend now on boreholes and wells. Only Danot town is receiving water tankered by the regional Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB). Private water tankering has been organized from the borehole in Boh woreda to surrounding *birkas* for those who are able to pay for the water. Similar arrangements with two water tankers have been set up from the Do'omo borehole to surrounding *birkas*.

Relief food delivery is by WFP-contracted short-haul trucks. Attempts are being made by DPPC/DPPB to make sure that food will reach the people who have migrated from their original distribution points. Al Najah, a local NGO, is

providing supplementary food to 1,200 vulnerable drought displaced people in Danot.

Korahe Zone

Conditions in the parts of Korahe zone where migrants from Warder and elsewhere are arriving with their animals are mixed, but better than surrounding areas to the east and west. There is pasture shortage in some parts of the zone, particularly Dobowein woreda. In Shilabo wereda, where rains were relatively better, pasture availability is subsequently better, particularly in the eastern part of the wereda. Livestock migration within Korahe zone is directed to the junction of Fik and Korahe zones and to eastern Shilabo woreda. Shilabo wereda has become a destination for lots of livestock that have been coming from different directions like Ferfer and Kelafo in Gode zone, Warder zone (as described above) and across the border from Somalia. Wealthy families transported part of their livestock by lorries from distant areas in Warder zone like Boh wereda and border areas of Somalia to avoid the distress that livestock might face, as there is no pasture and water during the two or more days travel to Shilabo. This movement in of livestock is expected to speed up pasture depletion. The situation will be closely monitored, as last year conditions deteriorated in Shilabo because of the same factors. It was reported that some livestock from Warder zone were emaciated. However, in general the livestock condition of Korahe zone looks satisfactory. There is no critical water shortage in Korahe zone as most of the population depend on shallow wells, which are still holding water.

Afder and Liben zones

As pasture and water supplies gave out over recent months in southern parts of Afder and Liben, especially in Dolo Bay, Dolo Odo and Bare areas, migration of animals from the southern parts of the zones have put pressure on pasture and water in areas to the north. There are reports of livestock and their herders coming from Mandera (Kenya), from Gedo region, Beletwein/ Hiran, Huder and Wajid (Somalia). There is pressure on resources - food, pasture and water - in the areas where animals and people migrated, i.e. El Kere and West Imi. Zonal administrators in various parts of the Afder and Liben zones are reporting serious water needs. In Filtu woreda, three kebeles are receiving water through water tankering. Among animals left in southern parts of the zone, the physical situation of the livestock has deteriorated, especially in areas such as Dolo Odo. NGOs are continuing to assist IDPs from Oromiya region in Filtu.

Available pasture lying between Filtu and Negelle is not currently being utilized due to an unsettled dispute over the rights to the land and water that lie there. The Ministry of Justice has engaged with local leaders to find a solution that could alleviate pressure on the environs of both towns, neither of which is capable of supporting continued pressure on limited resources.

Afar Region Assessment

The Afar Region Assessment was initiated in order to balance the recent extensive focus on the Somali region by the UN and NGOs on pastoral areas. More specifically, it presented an opportunity to assess new roads in the region and their impact on the economy. Further, the assessment made a follow up of various topics; mainly water shortage and Awash flooding mitigation and pastoral socio-economic conditions.

Afar are estimated to number between 800,000 and 1,000,000. Despite their relatively small numbers in Ethiopia, they are of some strategic importance because of their location between the highlands and the Red Sea. Located in a triangle of low land covering the Awash valley and the Danakil depression, the Afar's land has been divided by the Djiboutian and the Eritrean borders. The Afar

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are fragmented among clans and still smaller divisions and are characterized by a distinction between noble and commoner groups, about which little is known. Most Afar are pastoralists but are restricted in their movements by harsh arid climatic conditions. A number of them in the Awsa's territory have long been settled cultivators in the lower Awash River valley around irrigated agriculture schemes along the middle Awash.

Although 2001 seems to be a good year so far, Afar pastoralists remain vulnerable for various reasons:

- Afar are essentially trekkers, bringing animals and caravans of goods to traders. Trading lines controlled by Highlanders or Issa Somali and price mechanisms are not in the hands of the Afar (except ghee butter, dum palms and up to now the Dallol salt). Consequently, Afar traditional economy appears to be particularly vulnerable for lack of cash and income generating alternatives.
- Livestock diseases are endemic and can easily crack down on any successful season by killing animals in good shape or blocking commercialization.
- Special areas:
 - a) Eli Daar, one of the hottest area with poor grazing due to extensive hard volcanic soil, is suffering from a water shortage. On another hand, the region has been cut off from traditional grazing and trading movement to Assab (Eritrea) and Tadjourah (Djibouti).
 - b) Gewane and the marsh areas around which Afar pastoralists settled are commonly facing deep stress due to bitter competition for resources with the Issa. Afar people are demographically less dynamic than their neighbors due to the poor health status (high child mortality rates), Afar have to resist territorial pressure from Djibouti up to Awash on the east with the Issa and in a growing way on the west with the highlanders (source: Afar Pastoralist Development Association).
- As far as resource management is concerned, pastoralists are facing wayane bush encroachment (*prosopis juliflora*) infesting grazing areas.

Needs expressed by local authorities, pastoralists and various agency representatives include : Water shortages, health (both human and animal) and Education.

In addition to these priorities, various problems have been identified for specific areas such as poor animal marketing, flooding and Awash river bed diversion, wayane/*prosopis juliflora* proliferation (i. e. grazing land rehabilitation) and security for the "border areas" with the Issa, Tigray and potentially with the Oromo.

Already NGOs are active with projects covering most of these topics, mainly ACF (animal health and marketing), MSF France (human health and particularly TB treatment), Farm Africa (animal marketing, Early Warning Systems (EWS) and resource management), APDA (Afar Pastoral Development Association --- water and health education). In the future, such activities must expand and go on, a situation that requires additional funds and development care on a long-term basis.

Recommendations:

- Training and capacity building in term of marketing through pastoral market associations. With such kind of action there are rather good possibilities to inflect the terms of trade.

- Market associations should adopt a broader perspective like pastoral associations with a holistic approach taking in account water and grazing management as well as marketing.
- Explore all possibilities for economic activity diversification.
- Sectoral water interventions: a) additional water facilities in Eli Daar woreda, but based on a precise hydro-geological map; b) Awash diversions in the Awsa as well as control of the flooding up stream.
- Peace building between Issa and Afar communities along the highway in Gewane area (water intervention in Shinile might contribute to decreasing the competition for resources)
- Ecological questioning of grazing rehabilitation through measures to control wayane (*prosopis juliflora*) proliferation.
- Improve agency coordination in order to adopt a holistic view of Afar problems.
- Use of media, particularly the radio, in Afar for information dissemination campaigns (HIV prevention, animal diseases, animal marketing, etc..)

II) FOCUS ON HIV/AIDS

Overview

Ethiopia ranks as the third country in the world with the highest population of HIV infected people. Close to 9 % of the sexually active adult population, about three million, are currently infected with AIDS while 250,000 children are HIV positive with 1.2 million children orphaned when their parents were lost to AIDS. According to the National AIDS Council, one of every 11 people living with HIV/AIDS in the world today is Ethiopian. It is also projected by Ministry of Health, AIDS death toll in Ethiopia to reach 1.7 million by the end of the year. The current infection rate for adults is around 7.3%, and is projected to reach 4.7 million by 2014.

With the second largest population in Sub-Saharan Africa, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ethiopia is expected to take a very heavy toll on socio-economic development in the country. It is undermining the country's effort to reduce poverty, especially investments in health, education and rural development. If it continues unchecked, HIV/AIDS will alter the country's development by retarding growth, weakening human capital, discouraging investment, exacerbating poverty and inequality and leaving the next generation increasingly vulnerable to the impact of the epidemic. Investing adequately in HIV/AIDS prevention is a precondition for virtually all other development investments to succeed.

NAC-Organized Workshop on the Situation of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS

On July 24, the National Aids Council (NAC) conducted a one day workshop focusing on the Situation of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. At the workshop, representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), UNICEF and Save the Children USA presented research papers on the general situation of children affected by HIV/AIDS, human rights and HIV/AIDS as well as a review of the politics and practices regarding children affected by HIV/AIDS.

With the primary objective of providing an enabling environment for the prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS, the NAC, established in 1998, is chaired by President Negasso Gidada and comprises members from Government, sectoral ministries, religious organizations, NGOs, community based organizations, the private sector, individuals and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

Ethiopia Launches National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS

The President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Dr. Negasso Gidada, officially announced 8 June the launching of the national strategic vision to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country. The framework, which contains guidelines and principles, outlines the priority areas for intervention and the institutional arrangement to conduct programs. Dr. Negasso, who is also the chairman of the NAC, said the strategic framework designed for the coming five years has a holistic approach to ensure effective interventions while dealing with the AIDS epidemic. The president also expressed conviction that the threat posed by HIV/AIDS epidemic and other related diseases should constitute our central and top priority for the first quarter of the 21st century.

[Dear all,

In the next Ethiopia Humanitarian Update we are going to have a special edition on activities of different organizations on HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. It will be appreciated if you all could provide us with your organizations activities on the subject.]