

**UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCIES UNIT FOR ETHIOPIA
SITUATION REPORT FOR JANUARY 1994**

OVERVIEW

New Constitution

Following publication of a 'concept paper' by the Constitution Drafting Committee of the Transitional Government, a series of public debates on the formulation of a draft constitution took place in Addis Ababa during the week 2-9 January. Subsequently, the debate has been taken up in numerous other towns and regional centres around the country. Issues being discussed include the form of governance to be adopted - parliamentary, presidential or monarchical; the rights of nations and nationalities to self-determination and secession; social, economic, political and human rights of individuals; and the future status of women in Ethiopian society.

On 28 January, nine major political organisations active in Region 5 (Somali) held a press conference in Addis Ababa where they issued a joint statement demanding that the right to self-determination, including secession, should be enshrined in the new constitution. When questioned, representatives denied that unification with Somalia was planned, explaining that any move to break with Ethiopia would be subject to the wishes of the people in the region. The statement also called for Region 5 to be given special status following years of neglect by successive governments. The parties complain that the Transitional Government has not done enough to repair and develop the infra-structure of the area.

National Census

It now seems likely that the Transitional Government will the national census, previously scheduled for May, to avoid any possibility of clashing with the elections for a Constituent Assembly due to take place on 5 June. It is expected the census will now take place after the main rainy season, towards the end of the year.

AGRICULTURE

1994 Fertilizer situation

Carry-over stocks from the 1993 cropping season amounted to about 200,000 MT, including 16,200 MT procured by the Dutch Government against 1994 requirements. The estimated fertilizer requirement for 1994 is 162,000 MT, of which 140,000 MT is for the peasant sector and 22,000 MT for state and commercial farms.

On 17 January, the Transitional Government announced the farm gate fertilizer prices for the 1994 cropping season. The price for DAP has been set at 143.35 Birr per quintal while Urea will be 131.15 Birr per quintal, both slightly down on 1993 prices.

Adequate in-country stocks of fertilizer, the increased number of private retailers and an early announcement of prices are together expected to favour the increased use of fertilizer by farmers during the 1994 season.

Locust situation

No locusts were reported during January, but eastern areas, including the Ogaden, remain green and are therefore suitable for renewed breeding and the possibility of some movement of locusts to South and South-East Ethiopia during February.

Agricultural rehabilitation

The FAO appeal for 1994 for assistance to farmers in Northern Ethiopia affected by drought and wide-spread pests and diseases covers seeds, pesticides and application equipment, veterinary drugs and farm tools, amounting to 9.6 million USD. In addition, FAO has asked donors to fund four projects in the RRC appeal for 1994 dealing with the agricultural rehabilitation of displaced farmers in Region 3 (Oromia) and Southern Ethiopia (two projects), transfer of the South Gode state farm to local farmers and the rehabilitation of the Kelafo irrigation scheme (both Region 5 - Somali). These projects require a further donor investment of 47 million USD.

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food needs for 1994

Logistics

NON-FOOD AID AND SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING

RRC appeal for 1994

Nutritional programmes

WHO activities

Control of epidemics and disease surveillance

WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

General

Relief operations in the East were marred by unrest and stone throwing in the three Aware camps as refugees demanded immediate food distributions. Food deliveries to the camps had been delayed while WFP attempted to reconcile a new policy of using commercial transporters with regional interests.

Threats and harassment of highlanders working in the mainly Somali Region 5 continue to affect refugee operations. Several meetings were held between aid agencies and the local administration in an effort to resolve the issue. Public demonstrations continue in Jijiga where the Zonal Chairman has been accused of appointing friends and relatives to the administration.

Both UNHCR and ARA have complained to the Sudanese authorities in Gambella, following a number of un-announced visits to the refugee camps by local consular officials. There has also been a report of the 'self-repatriation' of 45 refugees on a truck hired by Sudanese authorities.

The UNHCR Regional Liaison Office moved to a new premises on 1 January, finally consolidating all Addis-based staff into one compound.

Sudanese refugees

The influx of Sudanese refugees into Western Ethiopia has continued at a low level. The limited numbers now crossing is possibly due to a shift of the government offensive to the Bahr el Ghazal and Equatoria regions of Southern Sudan. As of 25 January, the assisted refugee population in the west stood at 44,099 with the following breakdown: Bonga - 13,714; Fugnido - 19,988 and Dimma - 10,397. This is a slight decrease compared to December due to the departure of some 500 refugees from Dimma for reasons which are not wholly clear.

Kenyan refugees

UNHCR and the Transitional Government are investigating the possibility of repatriating some 5,500 Kenyan Adjuran and 500 Kenyan Degodian refugees if safe areas can be identified in North-Eastern Kenya. The refugees have been assisted on a cross-mandate basis for nearly a year in several locations near Moyale.

Afar refugees

WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and several NGOs continue to contribute food, water and medical assistance to Region 2 (Afar) where Djiboutian Afar refugees are scattered among related clans. While the fluctuating population has never been verified, WFP has allocated food for 10,000 people to ensure that the needy in remote areas are reached.

Repatriation

The Banissa operation which began on 16 December is about to end with 15,877 refugees having repatriated as of 31 January, mainly to Chilanko near Moyale. Following repatriation of the remaining 2,000 refugees, the camp at Banissa will be closed.

The second phase of the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from Sudan is expected to commence during February. UNHCR has established an operational base in Humera, North-Western Ethiopia, where many of the refugees are planning to return or transit. During the first phase of the operation in June 1993, almost 13,000 Ethiopians repatriated from Sudan.

The RRC and UNHCR are planning a mission to Gursum and Babile woredas in Eastern Ethiopia to assess the rehabilitation inputs required before the Transitional Government will permit the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees in Djibouti. Around 10,000 have already been screened in Djibouti and are ready to return home. They may be followed by a further 5,000.

Agreement has been reached on the planned visit to the Eastern camps by a group of officials from North West Somalia, now scheduled for the first week of February. Meetings to discuss repatriation plans will be held with the Ethiopian authorities as well as refugees. Meanwhile, UNHCR is working with the ARA to iron-out various points governing the planned repatriation, focusing on the principle of consolidating the remaining caseload and criteria for continued assistance to those unable to return home in the near future.

UN COORDINATION

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UN Emergencies Unit,
February 6, 1994