

**UNITED NATIONS
EMERGENCIES UNIT FOR ETHIOPIA**

SITUATION REPORT FOR JANUARY 1995

OVERVIEW

Government Appeal for 1995

Following the assessments conducted by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and the joint FAO/WFP Food and Crop Needs Assessment Mission in November, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) issued its appeal for food aid and non-food assistance on 16 December. According to the appeal, a total of 3,994,000 people will require 572,460 tons of relief food assistance in 1995. The population affected by food shortages are principally located in the areas of Tigray, Welo, North Shewa, East and West Hararghe, Gonder and North Omo.

In addition to the appeal for food aid and non-food assistance, an appeal to enhance the Government's capacity to link relief and development was made. A total of \$113,750,000 was requested for the main interventions under the capacity building component of the 1995 Appeal. This is in support of the implementation of the National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management (NPDPM), which will be given high priority in 1995. The Policy's main objective is to ensure that relief is provided in a manner that will contribute towards disaster prevention and sustainable growth and development. Emphasis is expected to be placed on Employment Generation Schemes and food for work programmes in support of the implementation of the directives of this policy. It is anticipated that in the coming five year period food assistance programmes will be carried out with the aim of reaching an ultimate target of 80% allocated to EGS and food for work projects and 20% through free food distribution.

Commemoration of the 1984/85 Famine

Events planned as part of the official commemoration of the 1984/85 famine in Ethiopia are scheduled to be held between 24 February and 22 March. The activities will provide the Government, international community, media and the public with an opportunity for reconstructive reflection and are expected to raise awareness regarding the National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management. The timing of the commemoration also coincides with a number of international initiatives intended to mobilise resources for rehabilitation and development in the region.

National elections

With the conclusion of the Constituent Assembly debates in December 1994, a decision was reached by the Assembly to hold the national elections within six months after the ratification of the constitution. Following this, the National Electoral Board announced that elections of national representatives have been scheduled for 7 May 1995.

EPRDF Congress

The Second Congress of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) was held in January to discuss the five year programme on development, peace and democracy with emphasis on national development endeavours. The meeting was chaired by the Ethiopian President, Meles Zenawi and culminated in the approval of a programme designed to lay the foundation for sustainable economic and democratic development in Ethiopia.

World Food Programme Regional Seminar

The UN World Food Programme will be holding a three day regional seminar on "Food Aid for Humanitarian Assistance in Africa" 6-8 February in Addis Ababa. The event will be attended by WFP Directors and government officials from 20 selected countries in Africa, donor representatives, UN agencies and NGOs. The objective of the meeting is to provide a forum to discuss the experiences of WFP and its national collaborators on food assistance in Africa, and to establish operational guidelines for improving future relief and refugee operations.

AGRICULTURE

Belg season outlook

Weather patterns during the past months indicate a warm episode (*el nino*) phenomenon developing, which is likely to influence the 1995 *Belg* (short season) rainfall in the country. The main factors that effect the *Belg* are high pressure over the Indian Ocean, tropical cyclones over the South Indian Ocean and the ENSO¹ activity over equatorial and pacific regions. In the past most *Belg* seasons that took place under the influence of an ENSO episode have had normal to above normal rainfall distribution. However, during such a time, some areas of the country have still displayed deficient or delayed rainfall patterns.

The outcome of the 1995 *Bleg* season is especially critical as it may drastically effect the food security outlook for the year. A repeat of last year's failure of the *Belg* would affect both the national food balance estimates and the drought-prone areas such as South Welo and North Omo.

According to the National Metereological Agency's long-term forecast, conditions arising from intense tropical cyclones in the region are expected to affect moisture incursion in Ethiopia during the short rainy season. This is likely to change towards the end of February. Consequently, areas of Sidamo, Bale and Hararghe expect a late onset of rainfall by the third week of the month. It is anticipated that the *Belg* distribution will gradually improve in these regions, followed by normal rainfall pattern in March, April and May.

Fertilizer situation

The implications on Ethiopia's food security of the recent sharp increase in the international price of fertilizers has been a topic of discussion between donors and the TGE. The price increase has necessitated a reassessment of the overall fertilizer imports for 1995 and an evaluation of the current fertilizer subsidy programme.

The TGE has suggested lowering the 1995 fertilizer sales target from 250,000 tons to 230,000 tons and increasing the fertilizer retail prices to 178 Birr per quintal (100 kgs) for DAP and 168 Birr per quintal for Urea as compared to the retail price of 1994, which was 143 Birr per quintal for DAP. The gap between the retail price and the actual price (258 Birr per quintal) will be met by the Government through budgetary support estimated to be approximately \$28 million.²

By the end of January, a total of 70,000 tons of fertilizer had been discharged at Assab port, which is 88 percent of the target figure for the month. From this quantity, 50 percent had been transported to the marketing centres of AISCO in the major *Belg* producing areas of North and South Welo, North Shewa and Sidamo.

¹ Warm sea surface development over equatorial and pacific regions resulting in wet conditions especially from October to April

² 1 US Dollar = 6.25 Ethiopian Birr

REGIONAL UPDATE

The *Belg*-dependent areas of North and South Welo, North Shewa and Wolayita in North Omo are considered to be highly vulnerable, as they have experienced waterlogging and the abrupt end of the rains in September 1994. These areas will need to be monitored closely and may face food shortages in the early part of the year. According to the FAO/WFP assessment, the final result of the *Meher* (main) season does not appear to have been better than that of the previous year and the country remains food deficient in many areas.

North and South Welo zones (Region 3)

In South Welo, the *Belg* weredas will need close monitoring in the coming months. Some had a relatively low main season harvest and will need food assistance for different periods of time, especially as they are largely dependent on the production of maize during the short season. The situation seems to be better in North Welo. CONCERN is currently conducting a nutritional survey in both zones and expects to commence food for work activities in these areas between March and May.

North Shewa zone (Region 3)

Post harvest assessments were completed in North Shewa at the end of January by CONCERN. So far, from the preliminary results of the assessment it has been established that five weredas, which had a poor *Belg* and low *Meher* production, will face serious food deficits. As some of these affected areas are located in the remote parts of the zone, consistent monitoring will be difficult.

North Omo zone (Southern Region)

Shortages of food have been detected in the Kambata zone in the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Region. According to Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF), they are starting food distributions together with the RRC in these areas. Other NGOs, such as CONCERN are currently carrying out nutritional surveys in North Omo zone and Wolayita. This area will also need close monitoring throughout 1995.

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food aid status

As at 31 January 1995, from the total import requirements of 1,032,000 tons for 1995, the notional pledge level is approximately 575,962 tons with a breakdown of 270,729 tons for relief/regular programmes and 304,873 tons for programme aid.³ According to the FAO/WFP Food and Crops Need Assessment, 427,000 tons are required for direct distribution through regular and relief programmes, 375,000 tons is required for programme assistance (through sales for general budgetary support). The report also recommended that 150,000 tons be met through commercial imports.

An additional 80,000 tons was included in the 1995 Food Aid Appeal to be allocated to sales in support of Employment Generation Schemes. As at the end of January, WFP report no notional pledges against this requirement.

Actual distribution of regular and relief supplies to beneficiaries as of the end of December stand at approximately 566,299 tons. With estimated unreported distributions of about 30,000 tons, the total deliveries in 1994 are expected to be around 600,000 tons. Distributions plans for 1995 have not been

³ Notional pledges are indications from the donors of possible commitments and are not confirmed pledges.

finalised yet as organisations are still planning their activities based on the outcome of the Meher harvest and the ensuing Government appeal.

Discussions are continuing between the donors and the Government regarding the final carry over stocks from 1994 to 1995.

Refugee and returnee operations

Following the mid-November clashes in Hargeysa, and the influx of Somalis to refugee camps in Ethiopia, the refugee/returnee food pipeline needed to be increased. In response to the Government appeal for emergency assistance to the new arrivals, major donors confirmed the need to release of emergency food rations through WFP. Several NGOs together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also provided shelter supplies to the population. Subsequently, WFP adjusted its food rations to include the new arrivals and has been providing food assistance to them since the beginning of January. In 1995, WFP plans to provide rations for 331,600 refugees as well as food for 88,250 new arrivals and reintegration packages.

Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR)

As of the end of 1994, the EFSR's stock level has reached 216,700 tons with physical stocks of 75,200 tons. The Reserve has secured adequate permanent warehousing facilities from the Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE), and temporarily rented stores from the former Ethiopian Domestic Delivery Corporation (EDDC) and the Food Management Unit of the Ministry of Natural Resources. From 26 storage facilities under construction for the EFSRA in Mekele (9), Kombolcha (12) and Dire Dawa (5), so far 7 have been completed in Mekele.

Logistics

According to WFP, just under one million tons of food aid was handled through the three ports of Assab, Massawa and Djibouti in the past year. As at the end of 1994, port stocks were at low levels in all ports. Imports in the early months of 1995 are expected to be dominated by shipments of fertiliser. Food requirements will therefore have to be met from the Emergency Food Security Reserve and carry over stocks.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WATER

Epidemics (Acute Diarrhoeal Disease in Ethiopia)

The short rains, which are expected between February and May, may contribute to the insanitary conditions that prevail in many rural and urban centres throughout the country and so lead to a spread of epidemics. One such disease with a high prevalence is Acute Diarrhoeal Disease (ADD). In Ethiopia, where the annual incidence of diarrhoea in children under five years is estimated at 39 million episodes, approximately 230,000 thousand related deaths occur every year.

Case management with Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) is the main strategy to reduce mortality from diarrhoea. Access to ORS, however, is well below 30 percent country-wide and there is a need for other options that could be made available to the at-risk population. Two studies recently carried out with the assistance of the WHO Emergency Preparedness and Response Group in East and North Shewa zones of Region 3 (Amhara) suggest that traditional cereal-based oral rehydration fluids may be more effective. In liaison with WHO/EPR, two departments in the Addis Ababa University are currently developing two projects that examine the effectiveness of traditional rehydration fluids.

UNICEF is currently negotiating to ensure the availability of ORS and IV fluids so as to avoid the problems encountered in 1994. Other measures are also being taken by UNICEF to counter the effects

of a recurrent outbreak of Acute Diarrhoeal Disease (ADD) this year.

Rehabilitation of health facilities

In January, the monitoring of WHO-supported rehabilitation activities continued in Northern Ethiopia. The current status of the health facilities under maintenance indicates approximately 87% of the sites have been completed. A joint WHO/Ministry of Health assessment mission is scheduled to visit Region 3 (Amhara) to further review the repairs at the project sites.

UNICEF Non-food Emergency Assistance Appeal

The UNICEF appeal for non-food emergency assistance was presented to the RRC in early December. According to the Appeal, a total of \$6,621,275 is required in 1995.

The general objective of the 1995 Non-food Emergency Assistance Appeal is to assist the government in the operationalisation of the National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management and its directives. Specific objectives are to:

- respond in a timely and effective manner in emergency situations in order to minimise the mortality rates of women and children;
- reduce the vulnerability of at-risk populations, especially women and children, through preparedness programmes; and
- accelerate the rehabilitation process in drought-affected areas of the country, with particular attention to the needs of women and children.

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

Sudanese refugees

The assisted population reached 52,045 with the following breakdown: Bonga 15,234; Fugnido 25,141 and Dimma 11,670. Concern over refugee movements and double registration have resulted in the re-establishment of checkpoints between Fugnido and Gambela.

The situation in the refugee settlements, particularly Fugnido, continues to be effected by factionalism in southern Sudan and attempts by Khartoum government representatives to convince the refugees to return to the Sudan. The Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), on the other hand, has reported intensive fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) factions in the south.

Somali refugees

After a short quiet period, heavy fighting was reported in Hargeysa 11-12 January, during which forces loyal to Egal cleared most of the Gerhajis militia from the town. Nevertheless, the influx from northwest Somalia to eastern Ethiopia remained at a relatively slow pace. The listed new influx reached 67,893 which, in addition to the previous 184,900, resulted in a total assisted population of 252,793.

Blankets and plastic tarpaulins have now been allocated for all the new arrivals. A second ration of food, for a planning figure of 70,000 for February, was under delivery by WFP at the end of January. Water and sanitation are now the main problems facing the population, particularly as the Camakober reservoir is now empty.

Djibouti refugees

A joint ARRA/UNHCR mission travelled to Region 2 (Afar) between 24 and 29 January to assess the situation of Djiboutian refugees in the area.

REPATRIATION

Repatriation from Djibouti

Weekly trains from Djibouti to Dire Dawa carried an additional 3,014 refugees, bringing the total repatriated population since the beginning of the operation in September 1994 to 10,559.

Repatriation from Kenya

The long awaited "green light" to commence repatriation of refugees from Kenya to Ethiopia was received from ARRA, allowing the operation to begin in early February with an airlift to Addis Ababa. A total of 4,437 returnees are expected to arrive in Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Jijiga, Moyale and Gode.

DISCLAIMER

The designations used above may refer to old regional or awraja names for the sake of familiarity. However, the designations employed and the presentation of material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of the UN concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning the delimitations of its frontiers or boundaries.

Information in this report has been provided by specialized UN agencies. Reference is made to any other source of information as necessary.

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