

UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia

SITUATION REPORT FOR MARCH 1994

Prepared by the Information Section of the UNDP Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia from information provided by UN agencies and NGOS

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OVERVIEW

Political developments

A mission was carried out in February 1994 to assess the preparations of the Electoral Board for the constituent assembly elections on 5 June. The prospects are good for the timely delivery of voter registration materials, consistent administration of candidate registration, training of polling station officers and delivery of ballots.

There are still important issues which the Board needs to address if the elections are to be conducted successfully. The areas of political party relations, logistics and training are of particular concern. There is a strong need for the Board to develop relationships with political parties and organizations.

The total budget requirement for the upcoming election was approved by the Council of Representatives and now stands at \$1,089,945 million. The amount requested from bi-lateral donors is \$1 million.

IGADD Meeting

A high level meeting of policy makers and technical staff of the Inter-Governmental Agency for Drought and Development (IGADD) met in Addis Ababa 28-30 March. The United Nations, the OAU and selected donors were invited to attend the meeting as observers. The objectives of the meeting were to exchange information on the current regional drought situation, identify major issues of an IGADD sub-region Drought Preparedness Strategy and to draw up guidelines for the preparation and implementation of the strategy.

CG Meeting

The Consultative Group for Ethiopia ended a two day meeting in Paris on 9 March with an agreement to commit \$1.1 billion for the period 1994-1995 in support of Ethiopia's reform programme. From this amount, \$350 million is in the form of balance of payments support and the remainder will be allocated to project financing.

The meeting was attended by delegations from 14 countries as well as several international organizations. Donors renewed their support for the TGE's overall goal of poverty reduction, through encouraging increased

production by the private sector, and improved access to basic social services. There was, however, some concern over the slow implementation process of donor-funded projects.

A number of donors expressed their support for the establishment of democratic institutions, underlining the need for parallel political and economic reform. They particularly stressed the importance of managing the forthcoming elections in a transparent and equitable manner, while ensuring respect for human rights.

Security

On 24 March, 1994, three land-mine incidents occurred on the Harar/Jijiga road about 5 kms from Babile on the Harar side. In all three cases trucks were heavily damaged and in two cases, there were injuries to the drivers. This is the route into Region 5 (Somali) as well as to Jijiga and the eastern refugee camps. Operations may be severely impaired if further incidents occur.

END

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Following the workshop held in February to discuss the draft National Programme for Food Production, Food Security and Nutrition, technical teams are now including the recommendations into the Programme Guidelines with the objective of a more integrated programme for agriculture, livestock and fisheries development.

Consequently, a decision was taken to incorporate into this programme agricultural components which were developed under the planning framework of other national programmes.

The UNDP funded training programme under the National Programme for Management of Economic and Technical Change is scheduled to be conducted from February until June 1994. The first group of 153 trainees comprised of regional executive committee members, completed their course in March. The second group comprised of Regional Bureau Heads, will start their training in early April. This programme will alternate the two groups of a total 700 participants on a comprehensive course of policy orientation, development planning, public finance and banking, investment and project planning and general management.

A four day Global NGO Forum was held 15-18 March on the role of NGOs in emergencies and social development. The objective of this meeting was to discuss NGO participation in promoting peaceful political resolutions and identifying the opportunities and constraints in the transition from relief activities to longer-term development programmes.

Revised RRC appeal

The Government and different agencies have reported large increases in the affected population as the food situation worsens. Consequently, the TGE is likely to issue a revised food and non-food aid appeal for Ethiopia by mid-April.

The thrust of the revised appeal is likely to be twofold. Firstly, an emphasis will be placed on how crucial early arrivals of existing pledges

are for Ethiopia this year; secondly, an additional request will be made for food and certain non-food items required to face the grave situation developing in certain key areas of the country.
END

AGRICULTURE

Belg rains

There has been much debate on the significance of the Belg rains during March. In spite of scattered showers in parts of the country, the rains have still failed to set in and it is unclear how widespread and substantial they will be. The Belg (secondary) season is normally expected to fall between mid- February and mid-May but has started later than anticipated. Although FAO reports that rainfall in April is expected to remain close to normal, there is nothing to indicate that the Belg will extend beyond its average duration.

Meteorological patterns characteristic of the Belg were observed during the first and second dekads of March (1 dekad = 10 days period). Erratic rainfall was reported during the first dekad of March over Wello, North Shewa, Central Ethiopia, Southern Highlands and Southern Rift Valley areas. During the second dekad of March a substantial increase in the amount and distribution of rainfall was recorded over most parts of these areas. The total amount of rainfall in April is expected to remain close to normal.

The continuing arid conditions in the East, South and extreme North of the country are worrying. The short but important rains in the Ogaden area seem to have so far failed; the onset of rain for the Borena Zone of Region 4 (Oromo) has been very late, exacerbating a critical shortage of grazing and water resources.

There are three major phenomena on which the occurrence and extent of the Belg rains are dependent. These are, (i) low pressure troughs originating in the Mediterranean emerging into Northern Ethiopia on their west - east course; (ii) high pressure mass from the Arabian peninsula which spread over the Eastern Ethiopian Highlands; and (iii) the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone which moves northwards over Ethiopia at this time of year, bringing extended cloud cover and rain. The relationship between these factors is characterized by oscillation, i.e. they lead to a distinct pattern of rising and falling which accounts for the intermittent nature of the Belg rains as opposed to the more consistent character of the Kiremt rains (long rains). (Source: Famine Early Warning System Project/FEWS)

Locust situation

No locusts were reported during March as locust breeding areas in Ethiopia are dry and no rain is expected in the Ogaden until April. According to FAO "there is no threat of locust outbreak expected and therefore Ethiopia will remain free of locusts".

1994 FAO appeal

In view of the approaching agricultural season, FAO has requested an urgent response from the donor community regarding priority agriculture and rehabilitation programmes.

FAO has received a total amount of \$4,775,000 in March from Sweden, EEC and the United Kingdom to be used for the provision of seeds to farmers in Tigray, North/South Wello and North/South Gondar.
END

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food needs for 1994

With the late onset of rains, attention is now focussed on the Belg-dependent areas of Wello, North Shewa, Southern Tigray and Wolayita. Relief agencies in these areas are restrained by insufficient resources in the face of increasing needs.

In the highly vulnerable Wolayita area of North Omo, the cumulative effect of prolonged dry weather and seasonal food shortages are pushing large numbers of people into food crisis. Concern, the main distributing NGO in the area, is delivering assistance but is extremely stretched in terms of resources. Further distributions in the area are planned by RRC, Concern and other agencies. Inter aide (France) continues to provide supplementary feeding, but there have been reports of an increasing number of severely malnourished children. The recent arrivals of rain in this area have been encouraging but the situation needs to be closely monitored.

In Northern Wello and Southern Tigray pasture is severely limited, with large livestock losses expected. Grain prices are rising; livestock prices are falling sharply. People have been instructed to remain in their villages and await aid supplies; this has helped to contain migration in the short- term, but there is already some movement towards centres such as Sekota and Korem.

A joint RRC/WFP/EUE mission visited Tigray and Wello in early February to reassess food needs, particularly in the western highlands of Tigray and Sekota in Northern Wello. The mission was alarmed by the greatly insufficient food aid stocks of 900 tons, and in addition to immediate food deliveries, recommended close nutrition surveillance by agencies.

Pledges and food shipments

By the last week of March confirmed pledges for relief and regular programmes amounting to 328,795 tons had been recorded by WFP, meeting 73% of the amount appealed for in December 1993. This amount is likely to appear much less favorable against the expected revised 1994 RRC appeal.

Although the pledge situation appears reasonable against the original appeal, the key issue remains the timing of food aid arrivals. WFP reports that there are no confirmed shipments after 5 May 1994.

As at 16 March, total port and in-country food aid stocks were estimated by WFP at 113,828 tons - with an additional 68,123 tons of confirmed shipments for relief and regular programmes expected in March and April. The pipe-line remains meager and without accelerated delivery of supplies the situation is expected to worsen in the traditionally hungry months of May through August.

Emergency Food Security Reserve

Out of a total request of 140,000 tons for the EFSR, so far only a total of 33,228 tons have been pledged by Australia (15,400) Canada (10,828) and WFP (7,000), leaving a shortfall of 106,772 tons to be met. WFP is now increasing pressure on the donor community to support this strategic reserve, especially considering that the December 1993 appeal figures were calculated on the basis of zero carry-over stocks to 1995, but an optimum EFSR stock of 205,000 tons.

Ethiopian Red Cross Society/International Federation of Red Crescent Societies Relief Operations

Despite no response to the Red Cross 1994 Emergency Appeal for Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society/Federation started operations in late February. Running operations on a cash deficit with 1993 carry-over food stocks, 1,483.77 tons of relief food-aid was supplied to 85,000 of the 190,000 targeted beneficiaries in Southern Tigray and Northern Wello by mid-March. According to ERCS/Federation, by the end of March an additional 14,000 beneficiaries were to receive distributions of 231 tons in Sekota (Source: Ethiopian Red Cross Society/Federation ERCS/Federation).

END

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WATER

Epidemics

Reports indicate the epidemic of acute diarrhoeal disease continues in several regions of the country. New cases have been reported particularly in East and West Hararge in the Ogaden and also in Cheriti in Region 5 (Somali). UNICEF has provided the zonal health administration in Cheriti with supplies of dextrose to help treat cases.

According to WHO, during the first two weeks of March, 658 cases of acute diarrhoeal disease were reported to the department of Epidemiology/MOH from East Hararge with seven deaths. The disease was also reported in Harar (518 cases); Alemaya (39 cases); Babile (21 cases); Garamulata (78 cases); Wobera (4 cases). The zonal health authorities in Dire Dawa stated 192 cases and 1 death in March. UNICEF and MSF Holland have related 22 cases in the Afder Zone of Region 5 (Cheriti), out of which there have been 6 deaths.

Cerebrospinal meningitis surveillance has been strengthened in all the regions and no outbreaks were reported. Similarly, although malaria remains endemic, there was no reported epidemic of malaria during the month, and in general there has been no indication of an outbreak of malaria during the first quarter of 1994.

In the Southern Zone of Region 1 (Tigray), the availability of local cereals in the market is decreasing and malnutrition diseases in children, particularly marasmus and kwashiorkor are increasing, as apparently are the numbers of animal diseases. Water shortages continue to be critical, with normally year round springs and other water sources drying up, and even larger rivers greatly reduced in volume (Source: Relief Society of Tigray/REST).

Rehabilitation of health facilities

As part of monitoring WHO-supported rehabilitation activities in Northern

Ethiopia, a team from WHO visited a number of project sites in Gondar, Northern Shewa, Tigray and Wello in February. Following this visit, reports have been received from the Tigray Regional Health Bureau indicating that construction of most of the health units identified for repair has already started, and the progress has been satisfactory.

Support for health services

A team of UNICEF Project Officers visited the Afder Zone of Region 5 (Somali) to assess the needs of displaced people in the towns of Dollo, Afder, Hargelle and Cheriti. Lack of physical infrastructure basic medical equipment, the absence of vaccine supplies and cold-chain equipment, the non-existence of EPI and other immunization programmes, and a shortage of staff were found to be the main problems. On the basis of the visit to Region 5, UNICEF is expected to formulate a plan of action for tackling the various problems encountered in the region.

Following the needs assessment missions undertaken by a team of UNICEF Project Officers in February, health supplies were transported to Regions 1,4 and 5. The supplies will be used to counter severe outbreaks of diarrhoeal disease, in particular among the refugee and returnee population in the areas.

During March, WHO provided the National Malaria Programme with laboratory and camping equipment valued at \$48,098. WHO also provided the National Tuberculosis Programme with medical supplies worth \$5,207.

1994 UNICEF Appeal

A joint RRC/UNICEF Emergency Appeal for 1994 was finalized at the end of February and subsequently sent to UNICEF headquarters for submission to donors. Particular emphasis has been placed on close collaboration with other U.N. agencies in the implementation of relief and development programmes under the cross-mandate approach.

UNICEF Appeal for non-food emergency assistance is aimed at achieving the two objectives of: (i) responding effectively to emergency situations when they arise with the implementation of advanced warning, prevention and preparedness activities; and (ii) helping to bring about improvement in the social and economic conditions of women and children by assisting the country to begin the rehabilitation and recovery phase after basic family and community activities have stabilized.

The area-based programme, as the major strategy of the new UNICEF Country Programme, provides an opportunity to introduce a mix of strategies that will enable linkages between: relief assistance, capacity building and community empowerment; rehabilitation resource assistance and convergence of activities; emergency programmes and development programmes; and government and community initiatives.

The breakdown of the UNICEF request for 1994 is: Health \$1,959,305; Nutrition \$859,800; Water and Sanitation \$1,130,000; and Relief (Preparedness and Mitigation) \$2,332,552; bringing the total of the request for non-food assistance to \$6,281,657.

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

Dispersal programme

The Region 5 (Somali) government administration, RRC, UN agencies and NGOs with the support of UN/EUE have agreed on a programme to disperse the camp populations in Gode, Dollo and Suftu. The camps have a mixed population of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The majority of the population have returned to their home areas, but some are still in the camps. 12,000 people have so far expressed a wish to leave and will be provided with transport, rations for a period of six months and non-food items such as seeds and agricultural tools. The preliminary prerequisites for implementation of the programme have been established. However, considering the prevalence of acute diarrhoeal disease in the area, the programme has not started yet.

Sudanese refugees

The assisted population of Sudanese refugees reached 44,297 with the following breakdown: Bonga 14,067; Fugnido 19630; and Dimma 10,600.

Four Sudanese refugees were killed, some 100 wounded and 1 missing when serious clashes erupted between the Nuer Mayout and Nasir factions in Dimma settlement between 12 and 16 March. Some 65 refugees were arrested; a curfew was enforced and security forces were increased. Following the establishment of a Peace Committee, calm was restored to the settlement.

One-time food assistance was given in Dimma to 1,250 drought stricken Surma people from Maji. Most of this population returned to their villages following the start of RRC relief operations in the region.

Somali refugees

Ethiopian defense forces advised UNHCR and other agencies to use escorts when travelling to the camps, especially Hartesheik and Darwanaji, due to the reported presence of armed Islamic fundamentalist groups in the area.

A series of security incidents threatened CARE water tankering operations to the camps in Eastern Ethiopia. Other security incidents, such as attempts to steal CARE and UNHCR trucks, were also reported.

Towards the end of the dry season, acute water shortages led local administrations to use UNHCR-funded facilities to supply towns and villages in and around Jijiga, Kebri Beyah and Lafa Isa.

Djiboutian refugees

Rainfall was reported in Region 2 (Afar). Pending the rehabilitation of wells in the refugee-impacted areas, UNHCR and ARA will use CARE water tankers as required.

Repatriation from Kenya

Following the closure of the Mandera refugee camp in North-east Kenya, spontaneous repatriants, particularly to the Suftu and Cheriti areas of Region 5 (Somali), were reported.

Repatriation from Sudan

During March, some 421 Ethiopians crossed the Sudan border into the Metema area of Region 3 (Amhara). Further movements were suspended at the request of the Ethiopian authorities pending additional preparations.

Repatriation to Somalia

The steering committee and its technical sub-committee, both comprised of representatives of the TGE, major donors UNHCR began to agree on specific procedures for re-registration and screening.

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 on the part of the UN concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Information contained 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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