

UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCIES UNIT FOR ETHIOPIA

SITUATION REPORT FOR APRIL 1995

OVERVIEW

Political developments

An agreement was signed by the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea in April establishing a free trade zone, which will ultimately lead to an economic union between the two countries. According to this agreement, domestic agricultural and industrial products and services would be exchanged free of tariffs and related payments. The agreement was signed by the Ethiopian Prime Minister on behalf of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Eritrean Minister of Interior for the Government of Eritrea. The two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding regarding economic relations and transport services.

The election process was at the forefront of political events in Ethiopia during April. The National Election Board clarified voters' records and issued certificates of candidacy throughout the country. In preparation for the voter registration, which started on 15 April, necessary material were distributed to polling stations. The national elections are scheduled to take place on 7 May in all regions except region 5 (Somali) and Region 2 (Afar), where elections will be held on 27 May. According to the electoral officials, a total of 266 international observers, including 80 from the Organisation of African Unity will be monitoring the elections.

Conference on the Impacts of Armed Conflict on Children

A three day international consultative meeting was held in Addis Ababa 17-19 April on the impact of armed conflict on children. The consultation was part of a two-year study on the effects of conflict on children and focused on the experiences of Ethiopia and 14 other countries of the Horn, eastern, central and southern Africa. This conference was attended by high level government officials, Non-Governmental Organisations, representatives of UN agencies and regional international organisations.

The three day consultation examined the plight of children in countries with conflict and others bordering conflict areas, and attempted to point out the limitations and potentials of specific interventions to be initiated on behalf of children in conflict regions. Strategies for the mobilisation of resources were also discussed. With the conclusion of the meeting, recommendations were made and the major elements of a comprehensive action plan were directed to the key international parties responsible for the protection and care of children affected by armed conflict.

Regional Symposium on Telematics for Development

Addis Ababa was host to a five day African regional symposium on telematics 8-9 April. The objective of this meeting were to provide a forum of discussion for information experts and users, and to promote international networking and information exchange. It also aimed at initiating the establishment of regional representations to inform policy-makers about the increasingly vital role of telematics and its relation to development initiatives. Planning and coordinating the establishment of networking systems both regionally and internationally were among the recommendations of the meeting. The symposium was jointly organised by the International telecommunications Union (ITU), the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural organisation (UNESCO), the UN Economic Commission for Africa

(UNECA) and the International Development Research Corporation (IDRC) and was attended regional governmental officials, telecommunications officials, Non-Governmental Organisations, UN agencies, educational institutes and the international community.

IGADD meeting

A special meeting of the heads of state of the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) was held in Addis Ababa on 18 April. The leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan met to discuss issues related to food security, economic progress, natural resources development and environmental protection, communications, trade, transport and humanitarian affairs, cooperation among IGADD member states and the strengthening of the authority itself. Also discussed at the meeting was the issue of the Sudanese conflict as IGADD has been involved in Sudan peace negotiations. At the conclusion of this meeting, the participants signed a declaration ratifying their commitment to IGADD and the issues discussed during the summit.

AGRICULTURE

Weather and agricultural conditions

The *Belg* rains, which fall between February and May, are usually much more variable than the main *Meher* rains both in timing and distribution, and contribute a maximum of 5% of the national annual production. However, in some areas such as North Shewa and North and South Welo zones of Region 3 (Amhara), the *Belg* may account for as much as 30% of the annual crop production. This year, a dry period in February and March damaged crop planting and production in South Welo and North Shewa is expected to be well below normal.

The major *Belg* producing areas of North Shewa and North and South Welo continued to receive sporadic rains in April, a pattern which has affected the late planting of *Belg* crops during the month. Barley and wheat crops have been sown in some areas but show signs of poor germination or stunted growth. However, land preparation for the main *Meher* season cropping seems to have generally proceeded satisfactorily in both zones. In North Shewa, no crops were sown in the highland weredas that have not received adequate rainfall whereas the lowland weredas have been sown with teff and maize crops, which seem to be growing well.

According to the National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA), rainfall had greatly improved in April over most parts of the country as compared to the previous month. The rainfall pattern was good in the Central zone of Region 1 (Tigray), Region 3 Amhara), Region 4 (Oromia) and the western parts of Region 13 (Harar) and Region 5 (Somali); this has been favourable for the planting of long-cycle *Meher* crops of maize and sorghum as well as land preparation for short cycle *Meher* crops.

Crop prospects in all *Belg* growing weredas of Arsi, Bale and Eastern Shewa and some weredas in North Omo are generally good because of the early start of rains and good coverage so far. The *Belg* rains in these areas have also contributed to the regeneration of grazing for livestock.

Preliminary estimates indicate that the expected production in the northern *Belg* producing areas will be much less than the amount mentioned by the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Needs Assessment Mission of November 1994, which expected a 1995 *Belg* production of 500,000 tons. This is an indication that most *Belg*-dependent areas of northern Ethiopia will definitely still need close monitoring.

In Western and Eastern Hararghe, the 1995 *Belg* cropping season has proceeded favourably, resulting in a larger area being planted. Land preparation for *Meher* crops of maize and sorghum is also in process, with a few areas already sowed. Preliminary assessments indicate that the production level in these two

zones is likely to be higher than last year.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Region 1 (Tigray)

Relief operations linked to food for work programmes are underway as part of the national policy supporting Employment Generation Schemes. During the past few months approximately 248,000 beneficiaries received food rations distributed by the Relief Society for Tigray (REST) in the Western, Central and Eastern zones of Tigray. About 117,000 beneficiaries were provided with food aid by the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP) in April. However, both agencies have depleting food pipelines and will need to programme for the coming months based on existing stocks, in order to maintain their assistance level. The Ethiopian Red Cross Society and the International Federation of Red Cross have also been carrying out relief distributions in the most affected weredas of Region 1 using carryover stocks from last year, as they have received little response to their 1995 appeal.

Region 3 (Amhara)

Non-Governmental Organisations involved in relief distributions have been given permission to commence relief distributions as household grain stocks from the previous harvest have become depleted. Food distributions will be carried out as a combination of food for work and free distributions. It is estimated that by the end of 1995, food distributed through food for work programmes would amount to approximately 45 percent of total food distributions.

At the present time food distributions at the regional level are carried out on the understanding that in certain food deficient areas Employment Generation Schemes and food for work activities are implemented following actual distributions whereas in other areas distributions and work programmes are carried out simultaneously. Meanwhile, food deliveries and donor pledges have become contingent on the delivery of action plans by the NGOs on where EGS and food for work activities would be implemented. However, it has to be noted that planning may not be immediately possible, especially in circumstances where immediate assistance is required in affected areas or where there are delays in targeting at the wereda level.

East and West Hararghe zones (Region 4)

Although plans have not been prepared to initiate relief distribution in Eastern Hararghe by CARE and the wereda administrators, a recent nutritional survey carried out by Save the Children (UK) shows a decline in the nutritional status in the lowland areas of the zone, and concludes that a number of weredas in the zone would require food aid until the *Meher* harvest in November and December.

A recent household food survey conducted by CARE indicates that market and livestock prices in Eastern and Western Hararghe are reasonably stable and show slight increases in a few weredas.

North Omo zone (SEPAR)

Relief operations in the Wolayita area have been progressing well, with assistance being channelled through general distributions, pilot projects according to the government initiated Employment Generation Schemes and supplementary feeding programmes. Several governmental and non-governmental organisations plan to conduct assessments on the situation of household food supplies, in order to improve the targeting of the population in need of relief assistance during the coming months. The results of a recent survey carried out by the zonal Early Warning Committee show

an increase in the incidence of animal diseases such as trypanosomiasis and anthrax, which will probably effect the price of livestock and subsequently, the general household economy.

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food aid status

As at 2 May, from the total import requirements of 1,032,000 tons for 1995, the notional pledge level has improved only slightly to 636,298 tons with a breakdown of 325,425 tons for relief/regular programmes and 310,873 tons for programme aid. In addition to cereals and pulses there are now 20,591 tons of oil pledges as well as 17,000 tons pledged to the Emergency Food Security Reserve.

It is possible that programme food aid from the US under Title III may be transferred to relief, in order to make up the shortfall of 105,575 tons in the current relief requirements. There are clear indications that the US Title III shipments may not be repeated beyond 1995. Donors are urging the Transitional Government of Ethiopia to reduce import taxes on cereals, in order to make commercial importation viable as a means of filling future cereal deficits.

(A summary table of food aid statistics is annexed to this report).

Logistics and food aid deliveries

Deliveries so far against 1995 pledges have been a total of 96,286 tons in all three ports, following an expected pattern of low deliveries early in the year. This has allowed the available port facilities and transport to concentrate on moving fertiliser out of the ports and to distribution centres. Port activity is expected to pick up from early May with a notional delivery schedule of 76,657 tons of food aid shipments in May, 65,547 tons in June and 83,869 tons in July.

RRC carryover stocks and EFSR and NGOs stocks and deliveries should be sufficient to resource the second and third quarter delivery plans, which are currently being finalised. Following the limited general distribution in the first quarter of 1995, the forthcoming deliveries will probably concentrate on North Omo, South Welo and North Welo as well several pocket areas that will become inaccessible with the start of the main (*Kiremt*) rains in June.

Emergency Food Security Reserve

Food imports for relief operations in certain areas of the country have been augmented with borrowings from the Emergency Food Security Reserve, facilitated by the EFSR Board of Trustees. Given the likely replenishment schedule of the Reserve, its Board of Trustees has allowed stocks to drop below the minimum level of 55,000 tons.

The major donors are likely to approve the conversion of a 52,000 tons loan from the EFSR to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) into a grant. This is in light of the fact that the RRC has had insufficient resources in 1994 to carry out its activities. This would place the EFSR stock level at the end of 1994 at 150,000 tons, excluding any new additions in 1995.

The EFSR storage programme is scheduled for completion in the third quarter of the year, providing the Food Security Reserve with a total of 205,000 tons of storage space.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WATER

Epidemics

Surveillance of malaria outbreaks and epidemics have been proceeding very well in affected pocket areas. Active surveillance programmes are being carried out by the respective Regional Health Bureaux and Malaria Control workers.

During April, several incidences of meningococcal meningitis were reported by the Regional Health Bureaux in the South Omo zone of Region 4 (Oromia). The number of cases so far reported has reached 210 with a mortality rate of five percent.

Rehabilitation of health facilities

The repair of WHO-supported partially damaged health facilities in North Gonder and West Gojjam zones of Region 3 (Amhara) was completed in April and health facilities in these areas have been reported as fully functional. Remaining repairs on the Metema hospital in northern Ethiopia has also been progressing and the facility, although behind schedule, is expected to be completed by mid-May.

Support to health services

In April, UNICEF emergency activities focused on strengthening the health facilities in the regions through the provision of essential drugs and medical supplies; visiting projects in Region 5 (Somali) implemented under the UNICEF-supported Wereda Integrated Basic Services (WIBS) programme; and monitoring other UNICEF projects in other parts of the country.

UNICEF Emergency Officers conducted a field trip in early April to projects in South Gonder, North Welo and Tigray. In South Gonder, the mission viewed the local weaning food production project, which started operation early the same month. This has been faced with some constraints including delays in delivery of accessory equipment, hygiene control problems and non-availability of shelter material. The mission also visited the supplementary feeding programme supported by UNICEF and WFP in South Gonder. This programme has been assisting undernourished children in seven weredas since march 1994 through the health care units of the zone. In North Welo and Tigray, assisted community nutrition rehabilitation projects were visited in several weredas. These projects have contributed to the improvement of the nutritional status of communities with children under five.

A UNICEF mission also travelled to Fik and Kebri Beyah weredas in Region 5, together with two consultants working on the UNICEF WIBS programme. The objective of this trip was to prepare an action plan for the implementation of the WIBS project in these weredas. The mission was not able to visit Fik due to heavy rains and impassable roads, but met with officials in Jijiga and carried out a complete situational assessment in the areas of health, nutrition, water and education in both Kebri Beyah and Jijiga.

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

Sudanese refugees

As UNHCR staff did not have access to the refugee settlements, the officially assisted population remained 53,262 with the following breakdown: Fugnido 26,165; Bonga 15,326; and Dimma 11,771.

Unconfirmed reports of fighting between Ethiopian defense forces and southern Sudanese affiliated with Riak Machar, who were said to be raiding Ethiopian border villages, raised concerns about movements of populations fleeing the fighting. However, no significant new influxes of refugees were confirmed during the reporting period.

Somali refugees

The assisted population reached 269,253 as the new arrivals, particularly at Daror, began to be listed again by the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). This influx seems similarly due to the fighting in Burao, north-west Somalia, between Egal forces and opposition militia.

With the continuation of good rains in eastern Ethiopia, the water situation remained satisfactory despite some slow down in water tankering due to maintenance problems with the Jerrer Valley boreholes. Heavy rainfall on 23 April filled the reservoirs in Camaboker.

Effective 1 April, the ARRA assumed responsibility for the supplementary and therapeutic feeding activities previously implemented by the Save the Children Fund (UK). They were also scheduled to take over the OXFAM activities in the water sector at the end of April.

Kenyan refugees

The ARRA accepted claims that 400 Degodian refugees were absent during the 18 October 1994 registration, thereby increasing their number from 799 to 1,199. Including the 7,472 Adjurans registered by the ARRA, the assisted population is now 8,671. UNHCR is requesting the registration data from the ARRA, particularly to identify exact areas of origin in order to undertake a more thorough review of the feasibility of voluntary repatriation.

REPATRIATION

Repatriation from Djibouti

The third and final phase of the operation, during which a further 15,000 Ethiopians may repatriate, remained on hold pending the go-ahead from the Ethiopian government.

Repatriation from Kenya

The airlift from Dadaab, Kenya, to Gode in Region 5 (Somali) began on 15 April, and by the end of the month a total of 557 returnees had arrived in Ethiopia. This brought the total since the beginning of the 1995 operation in February to 1,681.

Repatriation from Sudan

The first 1995 convoy arrived at the Quaja, Ethiopia, transit centre on 14 April. By 21 April, a total of 881 returnees had dispersed from Gonder after receiving food and non-food packages, income-generation grants and local travel allowances distributed by the Ethiopian Relief Organisation (ERO).

A second group, comprising approximately 750 returnees destined for Region 1 (Tigray) of Ethiopia, left Port Sudan on 30 April. They were expected to arrive in Ethiopia on 2 May. The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) has confirmed that all preparations are completed to receive the returnees at the dispersal centre at Inda Selasie in Region 1 (Tigray).

Reintegration

Planning intensified at both the Jijiga and Addis Ababa levels for a variety of reintegration activities for returnees from Djibouti and Kenya. As part of a concerted effort at integrated programming, a 28 April meeting between UNHCR and UNICEF Ethiopia, including technical staff from the water/sanitation, health/nutrition and education sectors, reviewed their respective programmes and agreed to develop joint workplans.

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 specialised UN agencies. Reference is made to any other source of information as necessary.

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Table I

 Status of 1994 import requirements and pledges as of 2 May 1995 (MT)

	<i>Relief/Regular</i>	<i>EGS/Monetisation</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>EFSR</i>	<i>Commercial</i>	<i>Total</i>
Import requirements	427,000	80,000	375,000	150,000	1,032,000	
Pledges	325,425	0	310,873	17,000	0	636,298
Shortfall	101,575	80,000	64,127	N/A	150,000	395,702

Table II

 Status of 1995 deliveries and confirmed/unconfirmed shipments as of 2 May 1995 (MT)

Total 1995 pledges (all categories)	636,298
Total deliveries	<u>96,286</u>
Balance due	540,012
Total confirmed arrivals	<u>19,993</u>
Unconfirmed arrivals due	520,019

Table III

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 Status of ports for the period between 01 April - 28 April 1995, including refugees and returnees (MT)

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	<i>Assab</i>	<i>Djibouti</i>	<i>Massawa</i>
Month opening balance	4,199	1,321	0
Arrivals during month	<u>16,605</u>	<u>9,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Total available	20,804	12,588	0
Offtake during month	<u>1,968</u>	<u>10,142</u>	<u>0</u>
Closing balance	18,836	2,446	0

Note:

1. Djibouti and massawa indicate Ethiopia figures only.