

UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia

Situation Report for May 1994

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**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**

Emergency needs and operations

Insufficient and erratic rainfall leading to a significant reduction in the area planted has led to a major failure of the Belg season. The revised Government appeal for food and non-food assistance and the concern of the donors, reflected in their very positive response to the appeal, portray the serious state of emergency which has evolved in Ethiopia, especially in the main Belg producing areas of North and South Wello, Bale, North Shewa and Tigray. Responding to the situation, the Government has formed a high level crisis management committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, which has taken steps to mobilise national resources and pre-position substantial food stocks in drought-affected areas before the rains make access difficult.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) estimates that 270,000 tons of food assistance is required for the second quarter of the year. During the course of May, the RRC has prepared a plan to pre-position and distribute approximately 300,000 tons of cereals during the second quarter of the year, with supplies originating from State Farms, Grain Trade Enterprise, Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) and from NGOs. In addition to meeting the needs for the second quarter, if effective the plan will also ensure food stocks will be available in the regions to meet third quarter requirements before the main rains commence.

The plan envisaged the delivery of 144,000 tons of relief food to district level distribution centres during the month of May. For this purpose, the RRC hoped to mobilise 350 to 500 trucks from Government sources, 1,000 from private operators and 450 to 500 from the NGOs and RRC itself. It is presently too early to confirm if this target was indeed reached.

Due to the process of mobilising available transport facilities to move in-country stocks to the drought-affected areas before the onset of the long rains, port off-take has been very low. As of the end of May relief stocks at the ports were: Assab 70,000 tons, Djibouti 12,000 tons and Massawa 20,000 tons. With expected shipment amounting to 250,000 tons from the United States and the European Union the ports are likely to become heavily congested during the months of June and July - thus placing the emphasis firmly on increasing port off-take.

## Political developments

The Council of Representatives ended deliberation on the draft constitution with unanimous approval in early May. The preamble of the draft document was endorsed after some amendment. During the debates certain controversial issues such as property rights and the right to self determination leading to secession were left to the Constituent Assembly for final decision. The elected Constituent Assembly will be mandated to accept or amend the constitution drafted by the Constitution Commission.

## Preparations for elections

Preparations for the Constituent Assembly Elections on 5 June seem to be well advanced. Diplomatic missions and international agencies have been invited by the Electoral Board to send observers and approximately 200 international observers will, therefore, be visiting polling stations throughout the country. Donor governments have also pledged almost \$1 million towards the external costs of the election. UNDP has already provided \$570,000 for election printing materials from country funds.

## Urban leasehold proclamation

The long expected law on urban leasehold was finally published in the Negarit Gazettea on 19 May 1994, but dated 27 April 1994. This reproduced, unaltered, the draft leasehold rates previously published in the press by the Region 14 (Addis Ababa) administration. All property used for commercial purposes (including rented houses) will be liable to a municipal charge for ninety year leases on zonal scales of up to Birr 6,000 (approx. \$900) per square metre. A down payment of one-third would be required. Many observers consider that this measure, when applied to existing developed properties, will amount to huge sums of money payable by medium and large scale businesses and private owners of rented housing. It is feared that many uncertainties and lack of clarity in the law will cause alarm amongst the business community and this could halt investment and even cause disinvestment.

Owners of some rented property have already taken action to terminate leases and repossess their houses before they become liable to the provisions of the new law, which would not effect owner-occupied residential property. Currently, several hundred international staff of different international agencies are living in privately rented accommodation. At a meeting with donors on 23 May, senior government officials gave their assurances that the legislation would be applied in phases - perhaps over several years - and that it would not be retroactive to 27 April 1994. Donors requested that such important clarifications should be stated in a written announcement as a matter of urgency.

## Capacity building at the RRC

Following requests by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission for assistance in capacity building, UN-EUE seconded a staff member to assist in the establishing of a Resource Mobilisation, Project Tracking and Fund Raising Unit at the RRC. EUE has also assigned a second staff member to the Aid Programmes Implementation and Monitoring Unit of the RRC to assist the Unit in the preparation and development of the action plan for drought relief food commodities distribution throughout the country.

## **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

Conferences and workshops supported by UNDP

During the month of May three important workshops took place:

The programme for Sustainable Agricultural and Environmental Rehabilitation (SAERT) was launched in Mekele, Tigray (Region 1) with a week-long workshop organised by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Tigray Development Association (TDA), which will act as the implementing agency. The strategy envisages a major micro-dam construction programme for small scale irrigation of crops and fodder. It will also include reforestation and prickly pear processing. UNDP has jointly financed the study conducted by a team of national experts led by the FAO liaison Officer to ECA. It is expected that UNDP will also participate in the implementation phase.

The national conservation strategy was discussed in a three day workshop from 23-25 May in the Ministry of Natural Resources, Development and Environmental Protection (MNRDEP). This was the culmination of a medium term programme to debate and formulate a conservation strategy with central and regional government organisations. High quality documentations were produced by the Secretariat funded by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Sahelian Office (UNSO) and UNDP.

The third meeting was the launching of the Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan (EFAP); a formulation secretariat was financed by UNDP and executed by the World Bank. The documentation presented by the Secretariat at this meeting was of a high standard and should lay the basis for a feasible forest conservation and reforestation strategy.

END

## **AGRICULTURE**

The Belg rains, which started late and were poor in distribution and amount, improved after the second dekad of April and most parts of Ethiopia have received favourable rainfall over the past month. Since early May the south-western and south-eastern parts have received significant and widespread rain resulting from the northwards movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

The overall rainfall pattern has been characterized by rainy periods alternating with dry sunny days, which is advantageous for crop growth as well as for the performance of agricultural tasks. The rains have benefitted the Belg crops already planted and allowed late planting of maize and sorghum, and facilitated land preparation for the short cycle Meher crops. As a result of the delayed planting time, the maturing of maize and sorghum will, however, depend on an unusual extension of the Meher rains.

The rains have improved pastures and water availability for livestock in both pastoral and crop producing areas. The condition of livestock, which has been critical in many areas as a result of the prolonged dry season, is already improving.

Fertilizer

With 1993 carry-over stocks of 180,000 tons and imports of 16,200 tons funded by the Government of the Netherlands, the total amount of fertilizer available within the country is more than 196,000 tons; this is considered adequate to meet the estimated requirement of 194,000 tons for the 1994 cropping seasons. Of the total amount of fertilizer, 176,000 tons have been allocated to the peasant sector. The 1994 sales target reflects an increase of 25 percent over the previous record sale of 156,382 tons reached in 1992. Fertilizer consumption was poor in 1993 as a result of the late announcement of fertilizer prices and unavailability of credit to farmers. In 1994, conditions for increased sales are considered favourable due to the Government's early announcement of fertilizer prices slightly below the 1993 level, provision of credit facilities and expected availability of sufficient amounts of fertilizer at the marketing centres.

Fertilizer already available at the marketing centres amounts to 96,800 tons; this is sufficient to cover the initial requirement for the long cycle crops. The balance of 100,000 tons is at central warehouses, and is in the process of being moved to marketing centres to be available for the planting of short cycle Meher crops between June and August.

#### Agricultural emergency programme

A project for the provision of seeds, pesticides and spraying equipment amounting to \$895,620, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom, has been signed and implementation has now started. The project will provide 850 tons of teff and wheat seeds as well as 6,000 litres of pesticides and 100 sets of spraying equipment for drought-affected farmers in North Shewa and South Wello zones of Region 3.

The project is the third FAO-implemented project this year for distribution of emergency seeds to farmers in Ethiopia affected by drought and crop pest damage. The other two projects were funded by the European Union and the Government of Sweden. Funds under the three projects amount to a total of \$4.8 million for the purchase of 5,750 tons of improved and local seed varieties.

#### Armyworm infestation

Recent infestations of armyworms have been reported in the East Hararghe zone of Oromiya, specifically in the areas of Gursum and Garamuleta with indications of the infestation expanding and causing severe damage to crops and grassland. Armyworm, which is a seasonal migratory pest, is occasionally found in high densities damaging large areas of crops and rangeland grasses.

In East Hararghe, areas which have been planted with short cycle crops of sorghum and maize are at great risk and immediate action to eradicate the pest is necessary. The Ministry of Agriculture, with the assistance of CARE, plans to control the infestation with insecticide application. CARE will be providing the MoA with transportation facilities and 5,000 dry-cell batteries to enable the operating of ULV sprayers.

The Jijiga administration and agricultural bureau has mobilised the NGO and UN community in the area to control a serious outbreak of armyworms threatening crops and pasture.

There have also been reports of armyworm infestation in West Hararghe,

North and South Wello and Bale but the extent of the problem in these areas is not known as yet.

#### **REGIONAL UPDATE**

##### Region 1 (Tigray)

This region suffered a major harvest failure in 1993 due to a combination of erratic rainfall patterns and pest infestation, and is showing signs of severe food shortages mainly in the Southern and Eastern zones. Contrary to the situation in the rest of the country, the eastern parts of Tigray have received below normal rainfall during the last three decades up to mid-May. The situation of livestock is already critical in these areas due to lack of fodder and water, and is expected to deteriorate further. This also causes concern for land preparation in the area for the Meher crops, as the oxen may be too weak to plough.

##### Region 3 (North and South Gondar zones)

The most severely drought-affected weredas in North Gondar are located in the eastern part of the zone. The RRC estimates that 226,000 people are in need of food assistance in the zone as a whole. In South Gondar, where food shortages, crop and animal disease and the shortage of water have further exacerbated an already difficult situation, five weredas (Ibnat, Simada, Lay Gayint, Tach Gayint and Libo Kemkem) have been identified as worst-hit with a total drought-affected population of 377,000 people. The affected weredas in North and South Gondar zones are mostly located in the lowlands.

During the first quarter of the year, the relief programme was seriously hampered due to a shortage of food stocks. The supply has since improved and relief agencies operating in the region have increased their distributions and are now able to transport food to areas which were previously considered inaccessible. The main agencies currently distributing in the area are Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR), the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) and Food for the Hungry International (FHI). In order to meet needs in the second quarter of the year, food distributions will have to exceed 25,000 tons per month.

##### Region 3 (North and South Wello zones)

The worst-hit area of North Wello is in the north-west bordering Tigray and Gondar. The rains so far have been inadequate and scattered and the prospects for a good Belg harvest are poor. Farmers are looking forward to the main rains to plough uncultivated areas for the planting of Meher crops. The rapid rise in grain prices and the sharp fall in livestock prices are pressurizing destitute families and increasing the reliance on food assistance.

An assessment mission by UNICEF in May detected signs of serious malnutrition in four weredas in North Wello. Based on the observations of the mission, the zone could be divided in two main sections: West of Woldiya and East of Woldiya area, with the western parts more affected.

##### Region 2 (Afar)

In a recent assessment of the Afar area which is predominately pastoral, the RRC have reported a distinct deterioration in the physical condition of

livestock suffering from a variety of widespread uncontrollable diseases. Existing ethnic tensions over grazing grounds are preventing free trade and, consequently, grain prices are rising whereas livestock prices are declining. The precarious food supply situation is expected to deteriorate further following the delayed arrival of rains. It is anticipated that at least 215,000 people will need food assistance in the coming months. There are currently no agencies distributing in the region and although the Red Cross assumed responsibility for 31,000 beneficiaries, their distribution was completed by the end of May.

#### Region 4 (East and West Hararghe zones)

In Hararghe, about one third of the farmers normally expect a significant amount of production from the Belg season. The onset of rains was too late for the planting short cycle crops, and may have serious implications for the Belg dependent farmers. The rains which finally started in late April throughout Hararghe, will facilitate the preparation of land for the planting of long cycle crops and, if successful, will help to ease the food supply situation in the last quarter of the year.

#### Region 4 (Borena zone)

There has been a decrease in ground water levels and pasture due a prolonged dry season and delayed rains in Borena. With the recent onset of rainfall, pasture and ground water supplies are expected to improve. However, the population in the area is very vulnerable following devastating experiences of loss of livestock and ethnic tensions leading to displacement from normal grazing lands. The recent start of the rains is unlikely to result in rapid improvement in food security and there is still need for substantial assistance this year.

#### Southern Ethiopian Peoples Administration

##### (North Omo and South Omo zones)

The rains which started late in both North and South Omo delayed planting and prospects for a Belg harvest appear to be very poor. These late rains have covered the drought affected areas with deceptive green scenery and in certain parts have made food distribution difficult due to road inaccessibility. Agencies and particularly the RRC face complications in transporting food in Wolayita, and in the more remote areas which are difficult to reach; this is a cause for much concern as people are not able to travel long distances.

Recent surveys by SCF (UK) and UNICEF have ascertained an alarming decline in the nutritional status and a consequent high rise in child mortality. The RRC have increased the total in urgent need of relief assistance to 500,000 as apparently the figure stated in the revised appeal under-estimated the number of people in need.

#### **FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS**

##### Pledges and food shipments

As at 31 May, total pledges against food aid requirements stand at 911,152 tons, out of which 660,569 tons are allocated to relief and regular programmes, meeting 76 percent of the total relief and food aid

requirements for the current year. Although pledging has been generally encouraging, so far, only 276,497 tons have been delivered. WFP reports no confirmed shipments after 7 July, 1994. Expected, although unconfirmed, shipments, however, are substantial over the coming three months and, if realized, could lead to considerable congestion of the ports, particularly Assab, unless off-take can be increased substantially.

U.S. Title II and III commitments and European Union pledges amounting to a total of 250,000 tons are tentatively scheduled to arrive during the next few months with a breakdown of 75,000 (EU) in June, 125,000 tons (USA/EU) in July and 50,000 tons (USA) in August.

The Government of the United Kingdom has pledged an additional 15,000 tons of food aid to Ethiopia which is expected to be delivered between mid-May and the end of June. Distributions will be made by CAFOD (3,000 tons to Tigray), Christian Aid (4,000 tons to North Wello through the JRP), Concern (3,000 tons to Wello) and SCF-UK (5,000 tons to North Wello).  
END

## **HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WATER**

### Epidemics

During the first two weeks of May, 1,279 cases of Acute Diarrhoeal Disease with 9 deaths, a case fatality rate of 0.7 percent, were reported to the Department of Epidemiology of the Ministry of Health from East Hararghe, Arsi, East Shewa, Jijiga and Dire Dawa. Efforts are continued to put the disease under control.

In order to combat outbreaks of Acute Diarrhoeal Disease, UNICEF provided the Region 4 Health Bureau with 4,200 bags of Ringer's Lactate, to be used in East and West Hararghe zones, Arsi and Jimma and the NGO, GOAL, with 600 bags of Ringer's Lactate to be used in East Shewa. A result of this assistance from UNICEF has been a significant decrease in cases of Acute Diarrhoeal Disease in East Hararghe, Arsi and Jimma.

The outbreak of Acute Diarrhoeal Disease in the Jijiga area has reportedly been brought under control, with a substantial decrease in hospital admissions.

### Rehabilitation of health facilities

A WHO mission visited North Shewa, North and South Wello in Region 3 the last week of May. The main purpose of the visit was to review and assess the level of progress of WHO supported rehabilitation of health services programmes which include repair of damaged health facilities, control of major communicable diseases and epidemiological surveillance. The mission also met with health and administration officials of Region 1 (Tigray) to discuss current WHO emergency health programme activities.

In North and South Wello, 11 health facilities are under repair, and in Tigray progress has been made in the repair of 14 health facilities. The reconstruction of all health facilities has been conducted satisfactorily and is expected to be completed by August 1994.

During the month of May, WHO has provided medical supplies worth \$50,836 for Tuberculosis Control, as well as computer software equipment and

medical supplies for epidemic control. WHO will also provide the Ministry of Health with 10 emergency health kits recently arrived from WHO Geneva, to be utilized for current emergency health programmes.

#### Support for Health Services

During May, teams of UNICEF Emergency Officers visited North and South Omo (Southern Ethiopian People's Administration) and North Wello (Region 3) to assess the impact of food shortages in the drought-affected areas on the health and nutrition status of the population.

In the ten weredas (Bolosso, Humbo, Kindo Koisha, Offa, Damot Woyde, Baco Hamer, Kuraz, Salamago and Woito) visited in North Omo and South Omo, a total of 445,623 persons are affected by food shortages. Malnutrition rates are at the highest levels recorded and over 80 percent of the children observed are suffering from terminal states of malnutritional marasmus and kwashiorkor.

In the wake of the assessment mission, WFP and UNICEF implemented an area based contingency plan from 8 to 16 May to counter the deteriorating situation. The main components of the plan were:

i) A Feeding Programme: The zonal administration, RRC and Health Bureaux at the regional, zonal and wereda levels and NGOs working in the areas coordinated their resources to organise feeding programmes providing dry and wet feeding; a total of 319 tons of supplementary food was distributed.

ii) On-the-Job Training Programme: UNICEF in collaboration with NGOs operating in the area, supported the Health Bureaux in organising a training programme for 28 health workers on management of supplementary feeding, nutritional monitoring and food storage. The training included community health education related to EPI, diarrhoeal diseases control and hygiene.

ii) EPI Plus: Feeding centres were used as catchment areas for immunizing children particularly against measles; ORS was provided with usage instruction; Vitamin A and iron tablets were distributed; vaccinations were provided in all the weredas; and NGOs were encouraged to increase their EPI plus activities.

Other measures taken include assisting local health authorities and NGOs to enhance collaboration and exchange of information in the area of maternal and child health; providing essential drugs, medical supplies, shelter material, and feeding supplies in support of the relief operation.

In the four weredas (Bugna, Gidan, Sekota and Kobo) in North Wello zone (Region 3) visited by UNICEF Emergency Officers during mid-May, the total affected population reaches 271,000 persons, with the areas west of Woldiya more seriously affected than areas to the east of Woldiya. There has been a high rise in the mortality of children due to malnutrition in the recent months. The Ethiopian Nutrition Institute will conduct a two week nutritional survey in these weredas to assess the nutritional status of children under five. Based on the results of this survey, a rehabilitation plan of action will be developed with three objectives:

i) to implement a feeding programme for the severely malnourished children;



ii) to initiate an income generating scheme for mothers of the identified children; and

iii) to train women and mothers to upgrade their skills and disseminate information related to health, nutrition and sanitation.

During the month, UNICEF provided Liben zonal Health Department (Region 5) with medical drugs worth \$7,700. The shortage of drugs has been a justified complaint of health institutions in North Wello; UNICEF contributed essential medical supplies to the North Wello zonal Health Bureau and will monitor the distribution process of the drugs to designated health centres.

#### **REFUGEES AND RETURNEES**

##### Sudanese refugees

The assisted population reached 45,684 with the following breakdown: Bonga 14,411, Fugnido 20,427, and Dimma 10,846.

A joint ARRA/UNHCR mission visited the border village of Jikao to assess a reported influx of 10,000 to 50,000 Sudanese into Western Ethiopia. The local government estimated a total of 1,000 Sudanese scattered in various locations in the area, and the mission could not verify the Ethiopian News Agency reports.

A slightly increased influx of Sudanese, some 200 per week, was attributed primarily to conflict between Nuer factions in the Nasir area. This conflict was reflected in the Fugnido settlement in Ethiopia, with two fatalities and a third refugee seriously injured in a clash between Nuer groups. Such incidents, which have been occurring more frequently in the refugee settlements, may be linked to divisions involving the Riak Machar and Maiwut factions.

While the influx continues to be primarily Nuer and Dinka, a group of 204 Uduk also crossed the border in May.

##### Somali refugees

The security situation in Region 5 (Somali), and neighbouring disputed areas of Region 4 (Oromiya), continued to interrupt the delivery of assistance to the eastern refugee camps. A number of grenade and land mine attacks were reported in the Dire Dawa and Harar areas, and a vehicle was reported destroyed on the Kebribeyah-Degehabour road by an anti-tank missile.

Threats of violence in the Jerrer Valley again interrupted deliveries by water tankers to the refugee camps. Due to substantial rain in the Jijiga area, however, water supplies have been adequate.

##### Djiboutian refugees

Two UNHCR water tankers were delivered from CARE to the ARRA for deployment to Region 2 (Afar). OXFAM, in collaboration with the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority at Kombolcha, is implementing the rehabilitation of wells in the refugee-impacted areas.

##### Kenyan refugees

A joint ARRA/UNHCR mission is planned to finalise options for the consolidation of Kenyan asylum seekers who remained scattered in several locations in the Borena area of Southern Ethiopia. The water engineer responsible for the assessment of the El Kalu site is on mission in the Moyale area to prepare the rehabilitation of boreholes.

#### **REPATRIATION**

##### Repatriation from Kenya

An ARRA mission which travelled to Kenya to identify potential repatriants is reported to have screened 4,000 candidates who wish to return to Ethiopia.

##### Repatriation from Sudan

In a complex logistical operation, 8,616 Ethiopians were repatriated from the Sudan: 5,952 via Metema in Region 3 (Amhara), 1,892 via Humera to the highlands of Region 1 (Tigray), and another 772 via Humera to Abdurafi in Region 3.

##### Repatriation from Djibouti

The possible repatriation of 15,000 Ethiopians remains pending the review by the ARRA and local administrations of the detailed lists provided by UNHCR. A response which has been preoccupied with the food crisis in the country, is also awaited from the RRC regarding the essential infrastructural requirements for repatriation.

##### Repatriation to Somalia

The Steering Committee and its technical sub-committee have agreed on the Plan of Action for the first step of the operation.

In the beginning of May, a delegation comprising ambassadors of major donor countries and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ARRA, RRC and UN agencies made a one-day overflight of Somali refugee camps in eastern Ethiopia.

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#### **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 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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