

**UNITED NATIONS
EMERGENCIES UNIT FOR ETHIOPIA**

SITUATION REPORT FOR MAY,1995

OVERVIEW

Political developments

Elections

The election day, Sunday 7 May marked the first multi-party election for Ethiopia. Some 40,000 polling stations opened their gates for the millions of citizens who came to cast their votes. In addition to local observers Britain, the United States, Italy, France, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, Canada, Finland, Norway, and Russia provided observers and the OAU had deployed 81 observers. The election process was peaceful with a high turnout in most polling stations throughout the country. In Regions 2, 5 and 13, the elections scheduled for 27 May are now postponed to 18 June to assign experienced personnel who could solve possible conflicts and irregularities.

Trials of the former Derg Officials

The Central High Court began hearing the response of the Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) against counter charges from defence lawyers of the accused former *Derg* officials on 23 May, 1995. Quoting international conventions and laws, the Chief Special Prosecutor said the leaders of any country can be held responsible for the crimes they have committed and be punished.

The Court hearing was attended by local and international observers. The Central High Court adjourned the trial until 10 October, 1995 stating that it will close for the rainy season and the remaining one month is too short to reach a decision.

A Fund Raising workshop

The third Eastern Africa Fund Raising workshop was held at Africa Hall in Addis Ababa 15 - 19 May, 1995 aiming to help NGO's update themselves on Fund Raising strategies and mechanisms and to enhance their capacity to generate funds locally and from within the region. Over 250 participants from Non-Governmental Organizations from Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda were represented. The Workshop was sponsored by the International Fund Raising Group, CEVO, CARE, UNICEF, UNECA, PLAN- International and other organizations.

Restructuring IGADD

The Executive Secretary of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), gave a briefing to some of the UN operational agencies on 23 May. He said that preparations are under way to restructure the organization to fully

address the problems of the region. The new structure is expected to create more regional cooperation for food security and peaceful resolution of conflicts. The special Head of States summit which met on 18 April, 1995 in Addis Ababa had established a Ministerial committee composed of Foreign Ministers and Focal Ministers. The committee is to study and make recommendations on amendments of the Charter and structure of IGADD and the modalities for improving the relations with the International Community. The new structure is expected to be officially unveiled during the heads of state summit meeting in September 1995.

Heads of NEWU's and Directors of Meteorological services meeting

The fifth annual meeting of heads of national early warning and directors of meteorological services was held at the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa from 16 to 17 May, 1995. The two day workshop was attended by 26 participants from national early warning departments from Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda as well as by representatives of various Embassies and International organizations from Eritrea and Ethiopia and the IGADD secretariat.

The meeting applauded the efforts of the IGADD secretariat in strengthening the national early warning systems through provision of equipment, methodology development and training. The meeting also underlined the importance of timely and efficient flow and exchange of information between member states and IGADD. The meeting also recommended that an Electronic Mail telecommunication system be installed in all NEWU's and meteorological services to facilitate exchange of data and information.

AGRICULTURE

Weather and agriculture conditions

Progress of the Belg season

In the Wolayita highlands, around 77% of the villages reported the quality of the *Belg* rains as very good, good or reasonable. Compared with each of the last two years, both the quality and start of the rains in highland areas are better. According to the National Meteorological Services Agency's forecast, May being the last month of the *Belg* season, the seasonal rainfall activity will gradually decrease towards the end of the month. In North Welo the 1995 *Belg* rains are better compared to last year but the SCF (UK) report indicates that Raya Kobo received poor rains and most villages in Wag received no rains at all. A late onset of the *Belg* in Raya & Kobo, Yeju and Wadla Delanta might delay the *Belg* harvest by one month. This might consequently prolong the period of food scarcity and the standing crops may also be exposed to rain damage at the start of the *Kremt* season.

Forecasts of the Kremt season

The country's rain-fed agricultural activity depends to a great extent on the performance of

the coming *Kremt* rainy season (June to September) than on the *Belg* season. According to the National Meteorological Services Agency's *Kremt* forecast, a number of global centers have been reporting that over East and Central Equatorial Pacific Ocean, sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies were showing a warming tendency. However, since March of this year this trend has reversed and near normal SSTs have prevailed over those parts of the Pacific. So, the prediction is that *Kremt* 1995 will not be under the influence of any major episodic event (EL-Nino or La-Nina^{*}) and normal *Kremt* rains are expected over most parts of the country. The areas with expected slightly early onset are: Eastern Highlands (Hararghe, Bale, Arsi) and eastern-half of Central (most parts of Shewa, South Welo) and areas with expected late onset are the Northwest (North Gondar, West Tigray and Metema) zones of Region 6.

Crop situation

According to the survey done by the SCF (UK) in the Wolayita highlands there has been an improvement with all villages reported planting crops for harvest either during the *Meher* or *Belg* seasons. Last year 15% of the villages located in the eastern highlands had not planted at this stage in the *Belg* season. Sowing of maize and sorghum was under way in Waliso and Bati, respectively during the first dekad of May. The late sown cereal crops were at emergence stage in North Shewa and some areas of Welega zone. Maize, teff and wheat were at flowering stage in some areas of northeastern highlands. Mehal Meda reported slight wilting of barley and wheat crops due to deficient falls which was observed during the first dekad.

In Western Hararghe, similar to the last two years *Belg* seasons, most of the available land has been planted. The fact that the *Belg* rains occurred on time and the onset has been conducive to good production, yields this season are expected to show a significant increase over each of the two previous *Belg* seasons.

FAO approved a 805,750 USD contribution from the United Kingdom for the purchase of 865MT of seed and 680MT of fertilizer to drought affected farmers in North Shewa and South Welo zones. Movement of seeds to delivery centers have already started.

Fertilizer situation

A Save the Children (UK) survey in 70% of the villages in the Wolayita highlands on the use of fertilizer stated that it made an effective contribution to production. However, only a minority of households (around 23%) within the villages actually had the access to fertilizer since it was obtained through purchase and the price is high to many at 92 birr per 50 kgs. Another team of SCF (UK) in West Hararghe reported to have surveyed twelve villages who used chemical fertilizer since November. Most of the households were given credit facilities for the payment. The cost was reported to be 78 birr/50 kg. All the villages who used the chemical fertilizer found it useful in increasing food production, though the distribution within these villages was not widespread (7% of households).

* EL-Nino is anomalous event of warmer than normal sea surface temperature in the Central and/or East Equatorial Pacific Ocean.

La-Nina is anomalous event of colder than normal sea surface temperature in the Central and/or East Equatorial Pacific Ocean.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Region 3

In North Welo, due to a poor *Belg* in 1994 followed by a poor *Kremt* season, Wadla Delanta and Lasta have the highest cereal prices in the area. Little relief food distribution has taken place since the 1994 *Meher* harvest. These are now priority areas for food distribution until the next harvest. The Weredas of Tenta, Mekdela and Legambo of South Welo were also affected by drought and food shortage. Save the Children (UK) regional office have started general food distribution to Tenta and Legambo woredas. The Ethiopian Red Cross Society and SCF (UK) have started general food distribution in Tenta and Legambo woredas.

Region 5

Unusual high floods of the Shebelle river towards the end of April and the first week of May 1995 brought great distress to the inhabitants around Kelafo, Mustahil, Ferfer and Burukur. According to the assessment team drawn from the different UN agencies and the RRC an estimated population of 93,875 living in 168 villages are still suffering in various degrees from the floods.

The floods affected about 81 settlements and an estimated 29,000 people were displaced from their homes. The health and nutritional status of the population at the time of the assessment was good but weakening. Communicable diseases like malaria, diarrhea and respiratory infections could become a problem. The assessment team felt that the most important area for intervention was in agriculture and the provision of seeds and hand tools was stated as first priority. Minor repair works to make the areas temporarily accessible have already been initiated by the local authorities, but some outside help is needed to perform this task quickly and to repair the damaged infrastructure.

Southern Ethiopian Peoples Administrative Region (SEPAR)

Surveys done by the SCF (UK) and GOAL in the western highlands of Wolayita indicate that the nutritional situation has deteriorated sharply in recent months. WFP representatives are supporting the Wereda Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee in expanding their EGS/FFW programs. However, only 1000 of the workers out of the approximate total of 6,000 working currently on these programmes received any food-wages for their work to date, and it looks unlikely that the 46,419 jobs target can be achieved during this emergency.

HEALTH NUTRITION AND WATER

An outbreak of severe acute diarrhea and vomiting (ADV) was reported from Zonal Health Department of North Omo which affected 1,151 people as of the 29 April, and causing 28 deaths. The Zonal Administration and MSF(Holland) took immediate measures to further investigate the outbreak and contain it. UNICEF sent 100,000

sachets of ORS and has placed a purchase order for 4,500 bags of Ringer Lactate and 4,500 bags of Normal Saline. UNICEF emergency officers conducted four field trips to Arsi, South Welo, Borena, Humera and Metema. In Humera discussion was undertaken with the Wereda administration, WHO and UNHCR to coordinate the community to start ORT corners at all the health care units with the newly supplied UNICEF materials and coordinate the community efforts in building latrines.

A recent survey done by Save The Children (UK) in West Hararghe shows a 17% improvement in the diet and nutritional status of the villages compared to the 1994 *Kremt* season survey. However, nutritional status has significantly declined in Gelemso and Darelobu which reflects the poorer 1994 *Meher* harvest experienced in these weredas, and diminishing household food stocks since the harvest.

Three traditional wells in Erdar (Ela Jabbi) have been improved and maintained and 5 ponds in Wachile, Dida Hara, Ketema, Sarite and Bule Loni were constructed targeting about 200,000 heads of Livestock in several refugee impacted localities in the Borena zone region. Hence, water supply is currently adequate for both human and animal consumption.

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

SUDANESE REFUGEES

Following the visit of UNHCR staff to Fugnido, the Administration for Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) reported a total of 1,408 new arrivals from 3 April - 21 May, bringing the assisted population to 27,958. Although Bonga settlement was also visited, updated statistics have not yet been received from ARRA. Therefore, the best estimate of the current population is 15,340. Together with the 12,145 now reported from Dimma, the total assisted refugee population in the West was approximately 55,443.

SOMALI REFUGEES

The assisted population reached 271,596 as another 2,343 new arrivals, primarily at Daror from the Garxajis areas of northwest Somalia, were listed by ARRA.

REPATRIATION

Repatriation from Djibouti

The repatriation of up to 15,000 Ethiopians from Djiboutiville, remained on hold pending agreement between the governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia to recommence the operation. It is hoped that discussions in Nairobi during the May IGADD ministerial meeting, followed by a Djiboutian mission to Ethiopia and an Ethiopian mission to Djibouti, will enable Phase 3 to begin during June or July.

Repatriation from Kenya

Despite a 10 day interruption due to technical difficulties with the aircraft chartered by

UNHCR Kenya, and additional delays while the charter company renewed their license, the airlift from Dadaab, Kenya, to Gode brought another 801 returnees to Ethiopia during May. Including the 557 who repatriated during April, a total 1,358 Ethiopians have returned by air to Gode. With the 158 airlifted to Addis Ababa, 154 to Jijiga and 105 to Dire Dawa, a total of 1,775 have repatriated by air so far this year. Including the 707 who arrived by road in two convoys via Moyale, a total of 2,482 Ethiopians have repatriated from Kenya in organized movements during 1995.

Repatriation from Sudan

Three convoys of Ethiopian returnees arrived from the Sudan during May. The convoy which arrived on 2 May was transferred by Relief Society of Tigray (REST) trucks to Inda Silase, from where 741 returnees dispersed to their final destinations in Region 1. Another convoy destined for Tigray arrived on 21 May. Due to the high level of the Tekeze river, the REST trucks had to detour via Gondar to reach Inda Silase, from where another 703 returnees dispersed. The third convoy, which arrived in Ethiopia on 26 May, also proceeded to Gondar. From there, 167 returnees continued on REST trucks to the dispersal centre at Inda Silase. Another 191 dispersed to final destinations in Region 3 with the assistance of the Ethiopian Relief Organization. A further 288 continued to Addis Ababa with the assistance of the Oromo Self-Help Organization, from where they dispersed to final destinations in Regions 4, 11, 13, and 14. Together with the 881 returnees to Region 3 in April, these 2,090 returnees during May brought the total repatriated from the Sudan during 1995 to 2,971.

Reintegration

UNHCR Sub-Office Jijiga organized two missions to monitor implementation of previous reintegration projects and to refine the needs assessments for future activities in Somali Region (Region 5). One mission, from 16-24 May, covered different sites in Jijiga, Teferiber and Kebribeyah Districts. The other, from 14 - 25 May, visited various locations in the Ogaden in Gode Zone. The latter mission included representatives of ARRA, SERP and the Region 5 Health and Education Bureaux.

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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