

MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA - JUNE 1996

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Belg harvest prospects are good in most areas of the country, coupled with effective control of armyworms and good fertiliser availability.**
- **An issue of concern remains the timely pre-positioning of relief food and the absence of a dry spell between the *belg* and *kiremt* rains.**
- **Control operations were successfully undertaken in 38,460 hectares of crop and pasture land to counter a recent outbreak of armyworm in Ethiopia.**
- **Relief items were dispatched by the DPPC to Afar, Gambella and Somali regions for flood victims (Gambella and Somali) and as a preparedness measure (Afar).**
- **Delivery of Phase I local purchases (121,000 tons) to EFSR warehouses in Kombolcha and Mekele is proceeding smoothly.**
- **The joint UNHCR/WFP/ARRA mission to refugee camps has recommended reduction of rations, re-registration and comprehensive refugee household survey.**

OVERVIEW

Relief needs and operations

Prospects are promising for a good 1996/97 domestic food production in Ethiopia. A positive mid-year outlook could be justified by a favourable *belg* harvest, so far effective control of armyworm outbreaks, good availability of fertiliser during the first six months of the year and a National Meteorological Services Agency's prediction of a normal *kiremt* (main) rainfall pattern in 1996. However, more conclusive projections on the country's food situation will have to await the outcome of the main season harvest (October-November).

The main issue of concern remains the timely pre-positioning of relief food aid in the vulnerable and most inaccessible areas of the country. This may prove to be difficult as the government's priority is the movement of fertiliser from ports and trucks are still being deployed for this purpose.

No major shortfall in resources for relief distribution have been reported by the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) and Non-Governmental Organisations during the first half of 1996.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

IGAD/international community meeting¹

On 15 June, a half-day consultative meeting took place in Addis Ababa between the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and the international community. The objective of this meeting was to review and discuss, together with the IGAD partners in development, a series of project ideas and profiles decided on by an earlier IGAD technical meeting (10-14 June, Addis Ababa). The following were among the issues raised by the donors at the consultative meeting:

- 1) strengthening of IGAD's co-ordination role at the regional, sub-regional and national levels to avoid duplication;
- 2) the need for IGAD to prioritise the presented list of 31 project profiles and to provide a realistic timeframe for implementation; and
- 3) the need to strengthen ownership and commitment on the part of the member states through financial support at the national level.

The population and housing census

Partial results of the population and housing census conducted in early 1994 were released on 7 June 1996 by the Central Statistics Authority of Ethiopia. Results issued for Addis Ababa Region (Region 14), Harar Region and the Amhara Region show the following:

Addis Ababa has a population of 2.3 million people, 800,000 more than recorded in the first census of ten years ago, indicating an annual population growth rate of 3.8 per cent. The Amhara Region accounts for 14.4 million inhabitants, the Regional State of Harar (the city of Harar and its surroundings) has a population of 139,000.

AGRICULTURE

Belg harvest prospects and meher forecast

Crops in practically all *belg*-producing areas, with the exception of Southern Tigray and some pocket areas of North and South Welo, are in good condition and the areas planted for this year's *belg* is substantially higher than recent years. The country could therefore expect a relatively good harvest in many *belg*-producing areas.

In most parts of the country, however, *belg* rains continued throughout the month of May and into June without the usual break in rainfall between mid-May and mid-June. The absence of the dry spell may, in some places, reduce harvest by damaging standing crops, increasing post-harvest losses and delaying planting for the main *meher* season. The area planted with *meher* crops may also decrease due to difficulties in land preparation. On the other hand, this abnormal continuation of rainfall should lead to improved pasture and water availability for livestock, particularly in the pastoral areas of Somali and Afar Regions and Borena zone in Oromiya Region.

¹ The general developments section of this report is more comprehensively covered in the "Horn of Africa - Monthly Review" prepared by the UNDP-EUE; for more information please refer to the latest HoA Monthly Review, Vol. 1., No. 3, covering the period 27 May - 28 June 1996.

The normal planting time for wheat, barley and finger millet during the *meher* season varies from place to place and generally ranges from mid-June to the end of the first week of July. The planting time of teff ranges from mid-July to the end of the first week of August. The planting time for pulses is normally mid-June to end of June.

Armyworm infestations

Control operations commenced in early June to counter armyworm infestations in Borena and East Hararghe zones (Oromiya Region), parts of the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Region and Jigjiga (Somali Region). Control measures in most areas have been successful, although a shortage of experienced personnel has, to some extent, hampered effective surveying and spraying operations in the Somali Region, Harar Region and Dire Dawa. Spraying is still ongoing in the Amhara and Tigray regions.

The Ministry of Agriculture has reported a total 56,360 hectares of agricultural area and pastureland infested; of this, control measures have been undertaken in about 38,460 hectares using 61,558 litres and 9,667 kgs of various insecticides.

Meteorological observations indicate that south-western winds are likely to continue into the first *dekad* (10 days) of July, bringing above average rainfall to the southern escarpments of Hararghe and Jigjiga. This pattern will prevent moth migrations from crossing the Rift Valley into western Ethiopia, but could result in recurring outbreaks in Hararghe and Jigjiga as well as migrations towards North-west Somalia (Somaliland) and the coast of Yemen.

Initial outbreaks reported in North Shewa, North and South Welo (Amhara Region) in early June could incite secondary outbreaks, both in these areas and further north. As large areas remain to be planted in the coming month, Ethiopia is still vulnerable to armyworm damage, the ground is suitable for future breeding, and migrations may occur during the first *kiremt* rains. The Desert Locust Control Operation and the Ministry of Agriculture have mobilised resources and survey personnel to continue monitoring the situation in the country, and undertake control operations.

Pesticide availability in 1996

In addition to favourable weather conditions and increase fertiliser use, careful pest control measure will be needed in 1996 to repeat the high crop yields of 1995. This year's availability of pesticides has so far been adequate to meet the outbreaks of armyworm in different parts of the country. However, the funding and training of staff responsible for monitoring and control operations in the regions remains a priority need if serious crop losses are to be avoided.

Current in-country pesticide availability stands at a total of 105,687 litres and 7,250 kgs of different chemicals. In addition, about 897,000 litres and 67,000 kgs of agro-chemicals have been tendered under agricultural development funds and are expected to be available soon.

Fertiliser update²

As at the end of June, fertiliser availability for the 1996 agricultural season amounts to over 434,000 tons (including 1996 pledges of 374,460 tons and 1995 carryover stocks amounting to 60,000). Of the total pledges, 339,460 tons arrived at Assab and Djibouti between January and June. A remaining 35,000 tons of fertiliser is expected to still arrive in July. Of the Government's fertiliser distribution plan for 392,000 tons, so far 223,860 tons have been delivered to distribution centres.

² Source of figures: WFP Food Aid Information Unit and FAO.

Sales have been slower than anticipated, with a total of 144,000 sold by AISCO (110,000 tons), Ambasel (25,000 tons) and Amalgamated (9,000 tons) as at the end of June. The sales performance of Amalgamated has been relatively poor in comparison to the other suppliers. The flow of sales information from distribution sites has also continued to be slow and only a few sales centres have been reporting, which may account for the relatively low sales figures so far reported.

The Government estimates that about 470,000 tons of fertiliser would be required in Ethiopia during 1997. Of this amount, so far 100,000 tons has been earmarked by the Government and 100,000 tons by the Ambasel company and 100,000 tons has been pledged by the Government of Germany.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Floods in Afar, Gambella and Somali Regions

Awash River Floods: Following reports of "heavy flooding" in Gewane and Bure-Mudaitu weredas, situated along the Awash River in the Afar Region, a brief rapid-impact helicopter survey of the area was carried out by the DPPC with assistance from the UNDP-EUE. The mission observed that the reported floods had actually occurred already in early March and had, by the time of the survey, considerably receded. Although some homes were destroyed and families displaced, it was assessed that large scale interventions would not be necessary. However, the DPPC, in its capacity as the lead agency for disaster prevention and preparedness, has taken the opportunity to pre-position necessary relief items to the area.

Note: Due to a misunderstanding regarding the joint report "Awash River Floods" the role of the national media in reporting the situation was somewhat misrepresented. It has to be correctly noted that the media have, in fact, made all efforts to ensure accurate reporting³.

Shebelle River Floods: A second survey was conducted by the DPPC to Mustahil area (Gode zone of the Somali Region) to review the current situation regarding reports of floods. It was observed that a total of 12,400 people had been affected by serious flooding of the Shebelle River (222 families displaced, 105 houses destroyed and considerable loss of crops and cattle). Moreover, about 40 lives were lost. The floods, which had occurred at the end of May, covered an area of 40 kilometres along the Shebelle river between the towns of Kelafo and Mustahil. Subsequent to the survey, relief supplies (food and non-food items) from DPPC and UNICEF were dispatched to the affected area.

Floods in other parts of the country: Due to heavy rains in the highlands, seasonal inundation has been reported from various parts of the country, including North Omo zone (Humbo wereda) and South Omo zone (Derashe wereda) in SNNPRS. In addition, floods have been reported in Gambella Region, where continuous rains caused the overflowing of Gilo and Akobo rivers and the flooding of some 35 villages and maize fields in the periphery. The DPPC has dispatched necessary relief items (food, clothing, utensils, plastic sheets) to these affected areas.

³ Refer to joint DPPC/UNDP-EUE report "Awash River Floods", issued 14 June 1996.

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food aid status

Of the total food aid requirements of 291,000 tons for 1996, about 186,000 tons is expected to be available from 1995 carryover stock and pledges. Pledges against a total 1996 relief and regular food aid requirement of 135,000 tons of cereals and pulses is very good, amounting to 154,101 tons.

Pledges against the 100,000 tons requirement for the Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) amount to 95,750 tons. With these pledges confirmed and considering outstanding loans, the EFSR is now only 4,250 tons short of reaching its medium target operating stock level of 307,000 tons.

Logistics and port operations

Between January and June 109,312 tons of the 1996 pledges for cereals and pulses have been delivered at Assab, Massawa and Djibouti ports. Fertiliser deliveries to ports over the past six months have been 339,460 tons, whereas general cargo has accounted for 235,000 tons. Port stocks stand at food aid (35,602 tons) and fertiliser (21,226 tons).

Trucks are still being deployed to transport fertiliser as the Government's priority is the movement of all fertiliser stocks from port. With expected fertiliser arrivals of 35,000 tons in July and current stocks of 21,226 tons, the mobilisation of trucks for movement of fertiliser may affect both commercial transport costs and the timely delivery of local purchases.

Pre-positioning and distribution

Between January and the beginning of June, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) and NGOs have distributed and estimated 110,000 tons of food to the most food insecure population groups. This figure includes about 41,000 tons planned for May distribution, of which a considerable quantity is for pre-positioning in the weredas that are likely to become inaccessible during the main rainy season. This distribution figure exceeds the amount of food so far delivered to Ethiopia against the 1996 pledges, as it includes carryover stocks from 1995 and borrowings from the EFSR.

NGOs have borrowed a total of 34,354 tons of grain from the EFSR during the first half of the year. EFSR warehouses are expected to become full by November, once local purchases and outstanding pledges arrive and loans are repaid. Already, some local purchases are being delivered to Mekele warehouses as those in Kombolcha have gradually become congested.

1996 local purchase programme

WFP and the European Union launched a joint invitation to tender on 6 June for the purchase of 4,000 tons of maize and 7,000 tons of sorghum for WFP's refugee project and 3,000 tons of wheat for delivery to the EFSR (European Union purchase) as part of the Phase III local purchases⁴. According to WFP, responses to this tender have been very good, with a total of 25 suppliers submitting tenders. As the prices offered have been very competitive, contracts are expected to be signed by mid-July.

⁴ Phase I, consists of 121,000 tons currently under delivery. Phase II, consists of 48,000 tons, but is currently on hold until after the main rainy season (September).

Of the European Union's local purchase of 75,000 tons of grain for the EFSR, so far about 16,000 tons have been delivered to the respective warehouses. However, delivery of the balance of about 62,000 tons may take two or three months, mainly due to the standards that have been set in cleaning the grain before transport. The European Union is confident that about 65,000 tons will be delivered to EFSR warehouses by September 1996. So far, the average offtake has been 350-400 tons a day, mainly to Kombolcha and Mekele warehouses. The Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise (EGTE), a major supplier, has not yet started delivery.

Euroaid's suppliers have not yet started deliveries of the 35,000 tons locally procured sorghum to EFSR stores in Mekele (Tigray Region), due to the slow clearing and transport of imported bags from the port to the traders in Tigray.

Market prices and trends

Wholesale prices of wheat and sorghum in Ethiopia have remained relatively stable in the past few months, but maize prices have continued to fall. Although this indicates a good availability of domestic grain in Ethiopia, the continuing decline in maize prices is of some concern as it may be a sign of marketable surplus in excess of demand. Unless traders can dispose of their old stocks before the main 1996 maize harvest, starting in October, maize prices may fall even further, particularly if another good harvest is to be expected.

Such a trend could have serious consequences for some small grain traders and could act as a disincentive to maize farmers.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Epidemics

Malaria outbreaks have been reported from various parts of the country. In West Gojam (Oromiya Region) and Gewane area of Zone 3 in Afar Region, malaria is threatening the most vulnerable populations. Reports have also been forwarded from the Amhara Region regarding malaria outbreaks in Bahir Dar, which is within the Ethiopia malaria zone. These reports have not, however, been confirmed by the regional Bureau of Health.

A one week workshop was organised by the Ministry of Health and WHO in Nazareth on malaria control operations, with the objective of building the capacity of vulnerable regions in disease identification and control.

Nutritional status

A recent *belg* season assessment by the Nutritional Surveillance Programme of Save the Children (UK) in North Shewa zone (Amhara Region) has indicated that the nutritional status in the area is stable and, given the good production prospects, is likely to remain stable until the *meher* harvest. However, as excessive rainfalls in May and early June can affect the planting of long maturing crops and household food security, and as food assistance in the area has been reduced, the situation in North Shewa will have to be continuously monitored in the coming months.

Another survey by SCF (UK) in East and West Hararghe zones of Oromiya Regions has indicated a deterioration in the nutritional status in areas of the two zones. In these areas, food becomes increasingly scarce in the lean period (first six months of the year), before food supplies begin to improve with the *belg* harvest. SCF have reported the nutritional status in three weredas of East Hararghe (Kurfachale, Girawa, Bedeno & Burka) has declined to below

the 90% weight for length "trigger" for emergency assistance. These areas, as well as parts of West Hararghe where food stocks are diminishing, will require relief assistance prior the *meher* harvest (October-November).

In South Welo (Amhara Region) and Oromiya Region, food aid would also be required to maintain the current nutritional status of the lowland areas of Were Illu and Borena until the main harvest.

Support to health services

The UNICEF-assisted supplementary feeding programme carried out in the three weredas of Yabello, Arero and Teltele in Borena zone (Oromiya Region) by CARE and the focal agencies of the Catholic Mission has been proceeding well. Despite a serious lack of transport facilities for implementation, so far 1,646 children under five have benefited from the programme.

Emergency water supply projects

A steering committee meeting⁵ was convened in mid-June to review the status of implementation of the Jerrer Valley Water Project. Implementation of this project is jointly funded by the Government of Italy (\$562,000); the Somali Region Administration (\$500,000); UNICEF (\$196,850); and UNHCR (\$600,000)

Among the activities so far undertaken are: construction of a 21 kilometre road from Kebribeyah to Jerrer; hydro-geological, road and topographic surveys; productive and exploratory well drilling; pipeline and treatment plant design; environmental impact assessment; and pump and generator installation.

REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

Refugee/returnee statistics⁶

The number of Sudanese refugees assisted in the three settlement sites in western Ethiopia reached 65,360 with the following breakdown: Bonga 16,815; Fugnido 36,931; and Dimma 11,614.

The total assisted Somali population in the eight camps in eastern Ethiopia reached 290,384 with the following breakdown: Hartisheik 58,695; Kebribeyah 10,238; Darwanaji 43,006; Teferiber 46,379; Camaboker 31,932; Rabasso 24,865; Daror 44,987; Aisha 15,282; and about 15,000 unregistered refugees in the various camps.

The number of Kenyan refugees remains unchanged at 23,670. The total number of Afar refugees from Djibouti being assisted also remains unchanged at 18,000. In addition there are currently 690 registered urban refugees in Addis Ababa. This brings the total number of refugees in Ethiopia to 383,084 registered and 15,000 unregistered refugees.

As reported by UNHCR, a total of 27,431 Ethiopians have been repatriated since the beginning of 1996.

⁵ The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA); the Somali Region Water Resource Development Bureau (WRDB), UNICEF and UNHCR.

⁶ All statistics valid as of the first week of June.

Mission to refugee camps

The joint UNHCR/WFP/Government of Ethiopia mission visited the eastern and western camps in Ethiopia between 4-18 June to review the food security situation of the Sudanese refugees in the western camps (Dimma, Fugnido and Bonga), the role of food rations in refugee household food security and the use of food rations by the beneficiaries in the eastern camps. The joint mission was to also assess the possibility of re-registering part of the caseload that is receiving assistance, but is not officially registered. Another issue of importance reviewed by the mission is the planned repatriation of refugees to north-west Somalia (Somaliland).

Observations of the joint mission

The observations of the joint UNHCR/WFP/ARRA mission can be summarised as follows:

Over the past years the number of refugees benefiting from food aid, shelter and rehabilitation programmes has increased significantly. The original planning figure for general food assistance in 1995/96 was 331,826 beneficiaries, an increase of 130,000 over the 1993/94 caseload. Currently, the number of refugees receiving rations is almost 361,000, with the following breakdown: Somalis (270,000), Sudanese (64,000); Djiboutians (18,000); and Kenyans (8,670).

The presence of large quantities of relief food on the market, particularly in the eastern camps, has raised some questions regarding the possible inflation of the caseload, suitability of the commodities provided and the cost effectiveness of assistance. This has given rise to concern on the part of the donors and has resulted in the inadequate resourcing of the programme, with WFP now facing a shortfall of 42,000 tons of grain for the remainder of 1996.

The mission also observed that the health and nutrition situation in the eastern camps has seriously deteriorated since 1995, with increased malnutrition especially among children between 13-36 months (ARRA and UNHCR nutrition survey carried out in May 1996). The mission assessed this to be the result of the inter-linking factors of lack of adequate and irregular delivery of food commodities, inadequate provision of shelter and blankets, not enough water, diarrhea and dehydration, respiratory infections and unavailability of camel milk in the dry season.

Recommendations of the mission to refugee camps

In concluding their observations, the joint UNHCR/WFP/ARRA mission made a series of recommendations for immediate consideration:

1. The mission felt that for the credibility of the operation and to secure donor support it was essential to undertake a registration of the refugees and arrive at a figure agreed upon by all partners in the operation. This registration should take place no later than September 1996 for the West and before the end of the year for the East.
2. In the meantime, the mission proposed a reduction in planning figures for 1997 and a 25% reduction in cereal rations for all caseloads. With current donor pledges, this would carry food resources until mid-September in the eastern camps and until mid-November in the western camps.
3. For 1997, the composition and scale of refugee ration will be revised in order to diversify the diet of the Somali caseload. To better reflect the fact that the Sudanese refugees

generally have access to food from their own resources, slight reductions were proposed to the food basket of this caseload. In addition, a supplementary feeding programme would be provided in the eastern camps to children below 5 and pregnant women.

4. To initiate the targeting of the most vulnerable, a comprehensive household survey of the refugee population was proposed.
5. Finally, a gradual phasing out of the general ration in the Sudanese camps (in the West) would be planned.

Peace talks in the east and their implication

Peace talks between parties to the conflict in the self-declared Republic of "Somaliland" made unexpected breakthroughs in June concerning the contested town of Bur'o. A meeting in the Ethiopian village of Balli Dhaaye between elders of the Habar Yonis and Habar Je'elo clans has apparently restored peace between the two communities and people have reportedly started moving back to the deserted town. Talks are expected to continue inside "Somaliland" between these and other groups. An official declaration from the meeting will have to await the arrival of several key figures, including Suldaan 'Isse of the Habar Yonis.

The results of the meeting in Baali Dhaaye are expected to give impetus to the peace talks planned in Kam Aboker (in the Ethiopian Somali Region) between members of the Hargeysa clans. Although there have been a series of delays in the staging of the Kam Aboker talks, both the "Somaliland" government and the elders have affirmed their commitment to the meeting, and the talks are expected to go ahead soon.

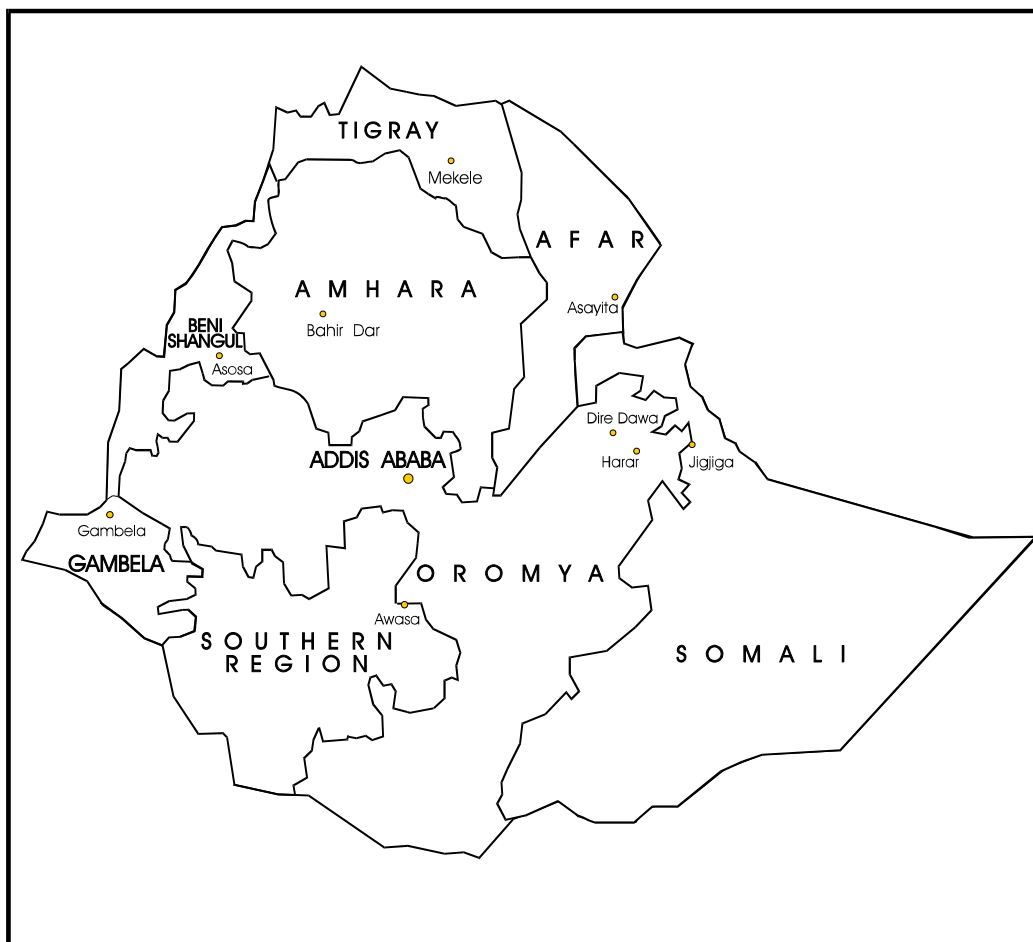
The outcome of this series of peace meetings, if successful, may create a climate conducive for the return of over 270,000 registered refugees currently in the eastern camps of Ethiopia, to their homes in the north-west.

REPATRIATION

Rehabilitation programmes for returnees

The Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) recently reported that it is facilitating planning of rehabilitation programmes for over a million Ethiopians who have returned from neighbouring countries. The projects are to be designed on the basis of recent studies submitted by the regional administrations and will be implemented in Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and Somali Regions.

Administrative Map of Ethiopia



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SOURCES:

UNDP/EUE field reports; Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs; CARE; European Union; FAO; FEWS; National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA); Ministry of Agriculture; SCF (UK); UNICEF; UNHCR; WFP; WHO.

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