



SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA August 1999

Consolidated UN report prepared by the Information Section of the UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia from information and reports provided by specialised UN agencies, media sources, the Ethiopian Government and NGOs.

Highlights

- ❑ The main season rains generally improve but isolated heavy storms result in water logging and some crop damage in high plateau areas while flooding of the Awash river basin displaces up to 5,000 people and threatens many thousands more;
- ❑ Food availability for drought relief operations improves significantly as additional pledges allow the securing of substantial loans from the National Emergency Food Security Reserve, however, faced with possible rising numbers of beneficiaries, concerns persist regarding the targeting of food aid;
- ❑ With food aid shipments amounting to more than 300,000 MT scheduled to arrive in Djibouti during the fourth quarter, concerns are expressed regarding the possibility of severe port congestion;
- ❑ A revised set of national guidelines for Vulnerability Assessment Profiling are discussed in a national workshop sponsored by the USAID-funded "Strengthening Emergency Response Abilities" (SERA) project;
- ❑ At the fourth Climate Outlook Forum in Kenya, representatives of national meteorological agencies and international experts reach a consensus on likely weather over the Greater Horn of Africa region, predicting a high probability of below-normal rainfall over southern Somalia, south-eastern Ethiopia and the eastern half of Kenya for the four month period September to December.

General Events and Developments

National Electoral Board announces date of general elections: On May 14, 2000, Ethiopia will hold its second general election since the overthrow of the former military regime in 1991. The National Election Board's announcement of the election date came amidst speculation that the border conflict with Eritrea would delay the event. The Board has said that 58 political parties are registered to participate in national and regional elections for the 550 seats in the House of Representatives. Candidate registration begins in November with voter registration and campaigning to start in December. According to the timetable for the 2000 elections, the date for verification and official declaration of election results is June 7, 2000. (*ENA, August 17; AP, August 18; Reuters, August 19; AFP, August 20;*)

Government launches new National Water Resources Management Policy: Ethiopia's Ministry of Water Resources held a three-day national workshop in Nazareth in early August to launch its new National Water Resources Management Policy. Minister of Water Resources, Shiferaw Jarso, said an implementation strategy and development programme for the country would now be formulated based on the new policy paper. Government bodies have been authorised to draw their own programmes and strategies for implementation of the policy and a joint committee is to be formed to co-ordinate programme implementation. Only 6.3 percent of the 3.4 million hectares of the country's irrigable land has so far been developed, while the provision of clean water to rural areas remains one of the lowest in the world. The Minister said the new policy would enable the country to utilise water resources more appropriately and contribute to solving the country's socio-economic problems. (*Seven Days Update, August 16*)

IMF commends Ethiopia's progress: The International Monetary Fund has praised Ethiopia for progress in improving macroeconomic stability and implementing structural reforms over the past two years, despite the shocks created by heavy terms of trade losses, adverse weather conditions and war with Eritrea. The statement followed an annual meeting between the IMF and Ethiopian officials in mid August. The IMF also encouraged the Government of Ethiopia to improve its domestic tax collections and strengthen the stability of its financial systems. The IMF further recommended an improvement of indigenous financial institutions and increased competition in the banking sector with the participation of foreign banks. The IMF report noted that the shortfall in domestic tax receipts associated with the trade losses and slowdown in economic activity in recent months had been largely offset by "extraordinary non-tax receipts", a reference to the estimated US \$80-100 million worth of public donations to Ethiopia's war effort. The lending agency has predicted a widening trade gap caused by the global fall in the price of coffee and according to IMF statistics, Ethiopia's GDP should grow by 6.7 percent in 1999 with inflation remaining at a low of 3.6 percent. (*IMF Public Information Notice No.99/77, August 16; Reuters, August 16; AFP, August 16*)

Afar community radio project sponsored by PANOS: The Afar Pastoralist Development Association is collaborating with the London-based PANOS Institute in the development of an Afar community radio programme. PANOS has successfully implemented a similar programme with the Borana community in Kenya and patterned on that experience, air time will be rented from Radio Ethiopia for the broadcast of programmes made by the community on health, education, environmental, animal husbandry and cultural issues. 45 pilot sites have been chosen where the community will form production and listening groups, the project supplying them with a radio-cassette player. The first broadcast was in June as part of the APDA education programme. Four activities are currently planned in Ethiopia namely the Afar radio project, advocacy on pastoralist issues, institutionalizing pastoralist issues through the establishment of the Pastoralist Forum lobby group and the introduction of PANOS and its work to concerned and interested parties. PANOS will be pursuing a number of themes in its work in Ethiopia including: Environment (sensitizing journalists to environmental issues); Media Development; Gender (Violence against women); and AIDS. (*Afar Pastoralist Development Association Update, June-August; PANOS*).

Peace efforts continue: In early August, Ethiopia and Eritrea received a draft document outlining "Technical Arrangements" for the implementation of the Framework Agreement proposed by the Organisation for African Unity in November last year for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the two countries. The Technical Arrangements were elaborated by a team of experts from the OAU, the United Nations and the United States meeting in the Algerian capital. Some days later, Ethiopia indicated that it would be seeking certain clarifications on the draft arrangements, in order to help harmonise the various elements of the OAU peace plan, including the "Modalities for Implementation" agreed at the Algiers summit of OAU heads of states in July. After considering the clarifications provided by the OAU, on September 4 the Ethiopian government indicated that it considered the principle that aggression should not be rewarded was dealt with in an unsatisfactory manner in the provisions of the technical arrangements. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that the Technical Arrangements also contained "new provisions not found in the Framework Agreement and Modalities related to a peacekeeping mission and matters involving sovereignty and governance in the areas of redeployment that indicated that the return to the *status quo ante* was not fully assured." The statement, however, emphasised that Ethiopia remained committed to a genuine and lasting peaceful resolution of the dispute and that the dialogue with the OAU would continue in the hope that an acceptable arrangement could be worked out. (*AFP, August 6, 9 & 23; OAU, August 11; AP, August 8; MFA, September 4*)

Landmine Action Forum established: A series of meetings on landmine-related activities in Ethiopia are being held in Addis Ababa to identify areas of cooperation and support. Participants are drawn from international and national non-governmental organizations and UN agencies and have been attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense. The Land Mine Action Forum agreed at its first meeting in April that the main area of programme focus, at present, should be mine awareness and victims assistance. The Forum established working groups in the areas of Demining, Landmine Education and Training, Survivor Rehabilitation, Advocacy and Policy Development and Information/ Documentation. The group continues to meet on a regular basis with a view to serving as a catalyst for the future establishment of a formal national institution concerned with the issue of landmines. (*un-eue*)

Special Reports

Flood update

A rapid rise in water levels in the Awash River due to heavy rains in the central highlands has resulted in localised flooding in zones 1 and 3 of the Afar Region. According to the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau, three weredas in Zone 1: Dubti, Det Bahri and Afambo, and 4 weredas in Zone 3: Amibara, Bure-Modaitu, Dulecha and Gewane, are the most seriously affected.

A joint DPPC/DPPB helicopter assessment of flood affected sites was completed on August 16. Participants of the helicopter assessment mission and villagers interviewed by a concurrent UNICEF mission confirmed that the middle Awash areas were suffering most from the inundation. Where possible, existing flood protection dykes had been strengthened but failures at several weak points had led to flood waters spilling out to cover wide areas of cultivated land on either side of the main river course. While Zone 1 bore the brunt of the initial flooding, by the early part of September further runoff from the western escarpment was contributing to rising water levels in Zone 3, encircling villages and threatening up to 20,000 people. As of writing, a further assessment of the situation in the Awash basin was being undertaken by the UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia.

Heavy runoff from the central highlands is seen as the principle cause of the flooding along the Awash river. Major tributaries rising from the western escarpment (Kesem, Hawadi, Ataye, Borkena, Mille and Logiya) helped swell the main river course which was already high from the partial release of water from the Koka reservoir, a major hydroelectric facility 60 kms south-east of Addis Ababa. Warnings that water was to be released from the reservoir (at a discharge rate of 300 cubic metres/second) were given by the Ministry of Water Resources in good time and reportedly led to precautions being taken to evacuate people downstream and strengthen flood protection dykes. Nonetheless, the additional flow contributed by the downstream tributaries broke through flood protection measures and resulted in the displacement of up to 5,000 people, while some 5,000 hectares of cotton and maize plantations were reported damaged when the dykes burst.

A relief team sent by the government to assess needs simultaneously undertook rescue operations of villagers trapped/encircled by the flood and provided limited food assistance. The affected villages in Zone 3 included Amibara, Ambash, Sheleko, Assoba, and Aragie camp. The Sumde and Menagesha kebeles of Amibara Wereda were totally inundated rendering all the residents homeless. The homeless took shelter in the premises of local schools. In addition, 2,690 workers of the Melka Sedi Agriculture Development Project have moved to temporary shelters in Melka Sedi town. According to the DPPC, the Melka Were Agricultural Research Centre in Melka Were and the Melka Sedi State Farm have also been damaged by the floods. Extensive damage to crops has been reported with farms either completely waterlogged or washed away. Careful monitoring of the situation continues with more heavy rain and possible further flooding expected during September.

Earlier in the month, according to a press release by the Ethiopian railway authorities, the railway passenger service between Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa had been temporarily suspended due to the threat of flood. The decision was taken to spare passengers any inconveniences on the way, the release said, adding that the decision applied only to passengers and that freight transport would continue as usual.

Meanwhile, torrential rains and hail in the highlands of Ethiopia have caused extensive damage to crops, livestock and houses according to local media reports. Some 600 hectares of barley, wheat, chickpeas and lentils belonging to 500 farmers of southern Tigray in the north of the country have been affected, while on September 1 it was reported that a bridge at Mersa, on the main north-south road linking Addis Ababa with Tigray had collapsed due to flood damage. The failure of the bridge closed the road in both directions to all but light traffic.

National Fertiliser Sector Project

Against the background of limited scope for increasing the area under cultivation, diminishing soil fertility and population increase at the rate of about three percent, the use of mineral fertilizer is seen by the Government of Ethiopia as a fundamental pre-requisite in the achievement of its goal of food security in Ethiopia. To promote the use of fertilizer a National Fertilizer Policy was announced in November 1993. Within the framework of the Policy, the National Fertilizer Sector Project was formulated and became operational on 16 February, 1996. The project mainly aims at the establishment of an efficient and competitive fertilizer sector with the immediate objective of increasing food production in the country. The Government of Ethiopia, IDA and bilateral funding from donors finances the project. The National Fertilized Industry Agency, established in 1994 is the overall institution responsible for the implementation of the project.

Since the inception of the National Fertilizer Policy, the Government of Ethiopia has taken important measures towards the liberalization of the fertilizer market. Notable among these measures is the deregulation of the retail fertilizer price, which took effect January 1997. This measure was matched by the simultaneous withdrawal of the government subsidy for fertilizer in the same year. Implemented two years ahead of schedule, the liberalization of the fertilizer market has been supported by a national programme establishing credit systems at the retail level, particularly where farmers have no cash resources to purchase fertilizers.

About 90 percent of fertilizer sales to farmers are on credit extended by the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and, to a lesser extent, emerging rural credit institutions. Credit for purchase of fertilizer is provided to the farmer through the Regional Administrations who put up the necessary collateral and negotiate a block loan from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. Up until 1998, the Development Bank of Ethiopia was also providing loans to regional governments through this system. Indicative of a continuing liberalisation of the sector, there are now also a limited number of private micro-credit institutions emerging who are providing loans to farmers for fertilizer. These include Dedebit in Tigray, ACSI in Amhara Region and OMO in SNNPR.

Farmers who want to get credit are generally required to pay a minimum of 25 percent of the loan as a down payment. Those who can afford to can pay more than this. For poor farmers the requirement to make a down payment is sometimes waived. In addition to this, farmer's service co-operatives facilitate the sale of fertiliser on credit. Prior to 1996 loans were advanced to farmers through service co-operatives and other such groups without a regional government guarantee for full settlement of the loan. There still exist, from this time, unpaid or long overdue loans. In the 1995/1996 production season the current arrangement was put in place to ensure maximum recovery of input loans. Under this system, regional authorities provide the bank guarantees and allocate the credit fund to service co-operatives. A service co-operative promotion officer manages the process at wereda level and extension workers provide additional advice from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Credit repayment performance in the crop year 1998/1999

According to government reports, agricultural input credit collection has been going smoothly since the regional authorities began to sign loan contracts with the bank on behalf of the beneficiaries. Thus, all loans advanced to small holder farmers in the crop year 1996/1997 against the guarantees of regional government's were fully settled. Collection of input credit advanced in the crop year 1997/1998 is still on-going.

For the current cropping year, two administrative approaches exist. In the case of Amhara region, the arrangement is that the regional government is directly involved in the processing and provision of purchase orders to suppliers of agricultural inputs. The regional authorities then authorise the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia to disburse the loans in favour of the suppliers. In the case of the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, Oromiya Regional State and the Addis Ababa Regional Administration loan contracts have been signed for their total respective input credit and the actual loan disbursement and collection handled directly by the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

For the current year, the loan requests by regional governments were considered substantially higher than their actual need. As long as the regional governments continue to guarantee the input credit, however, the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia will also continue to provide the credit. Table I provides a breakdown of the loans approved for the cropping year 1998/99.

Table I: Input loan approved for the 1998/99 Crop Year

Region	Amount (Birr)
Oromiya	256,540,123
Amhara	150,000,000
SNNP	192,177,952
Addis Ababa	4,196,079
Total	602,914,154

Source: NFIA

According to the most recent reports, total fertiliser sales during the current cropping year have reached similar levels to last year, amounting to approximately 280,000 MT. This amount, however, falls short of the projected 419,000 MT that was targeted for consumption in 1999.

There are three main challenges currently facing the fertiliser sector in Ethiopia: the shortage of transport, an increase in transport costs (i.e. Djibouti to Addis Ababa was previously 30 Ethiopian Cents per MT/Km now it is 49 cents MT/Km and rising; from Addis Ababa to various outlying areas the cost was 47 cents MT/Km, now it is 75 cents MT/Km) and declining value of the Ethiopia Birr on international markets. These factors have in turn contributed negatively to sales in that fertiliser did not always arrive on time in rural areas and has increased in price and will continue to increase in price. To minimise the impact of these factors, Ambassel, and other private fertiliser firms have worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to identify areas of the country and farmers with the most immediate need and therefore prioritise delivery schedules.

Guidelines for vulnerability profiling launched

Recognising that there is a serious shortage of adequate baseline information on vulnerability to famine and other disasters, the Federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission has been working on guidelines for the development of vulnerability profiles for the most disaster-prone weredas, zones and regions in the country. The main impetus came from a workshop held in June 1997 entitled "Vulnerability in Ethiopia - From Disaster to Development". One of the main recommendations of the meeting was the development of detailed profiles that could help identify the areas and population groups that are most at risk to particular hazards/events and the reasons for such vulnerability. Based on the workshop recommendations, the DPPC developed the initiative "Strengthening Emergency Response Abilities" (SERA) which has been funded on a project basis by USAID for the period 1997–2001.

The main objectives of the SERA Project are:

- Develop vulnerability profiles of selected disaster prone areas of the country;
- Conduct relevant vulnerability research and special studies on root causes of vulnerability;
- Strengthen response mechanisms and development interventions through incorporation of the results of vulnerability profiles and research.

The project area covers many of the highly vulnerable zones of four regional states, namely, Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and the SNNPR. Under the project, zonal and wereda level vulnerability profiles will be developed by the regions supported by SERA staff and in co-operation with the DPPC Policy, Planning and Programme Department.

A major part of the SERA initiative has been the development of national guidelines for the development of vulnerability profiles. The first draft of the guidelines were presented to the DPPC Vulnerability Assessment Group (VAG) in May 1999. The VAG is comprised of the DPPC, the Ministry of Economic

Development and Co-operation, National Science and Technology Commission, Environmental Protection Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Health, Ethiopian Agricultural research organisation, Addis Ababa University, UN agencies, donors and NGOs. In addition, counterparts in the four participating regions (Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR), received and reviewed the first draft along with primary and secondary data collection instruments which were drafted and translated into Amharic and pre-tested in one zone and two weredas in early July.

The second revised draft of the "National Guidelines for Vulnerability Profile Development" was presented at a National Workshop held in Addis Ababa by the DPPC on August 23, 1999. The guidelines were further revised and fine-tuned at this workshop and will undergo additional pre-testing at regional and zonal level with training and translations to be provided where appropriate and the training outlines and field research protocols to be drafted for pre-testing due to start in late August.

The objective of the National Guidelines is to assist regions, zones and weredas develop their own vulnerability profile by collecting and analysing the necessary data for their own response packages and development plan. The Guidelines are expected to be used primarily by the Vulnerability Working Groups, (VWG's), Vulnerability Information Management Units, (VIMU), and Data Collection Groups, (DCG) established by the SERA project. According to the project, the VIMU and DCG are institutions at the wereda and zonal levels responsible for the standardised collection of primary data from agro-ecological zones, peasants associations, households and individuals using key informants, focus group discussions, household questionnaires, woman's questionnaires and anthropometric surveys. These institutions will also use data management software packages chosen for the project's data-entry and database management.

Government institutions and non-governmental organisations, at all levels, have been called upon by the DPPC to provide the necessary secondary data for the preparation of the vulnerability profiles. In addition, the DPPC has requested heads of organisations and other experts to explain the nature of available data in their organisations, its coverage, reliability and potential for use in the development of the profiles. Furthermore, the DPPC will be asking partner organisations to make available experts to work as focal persons and as members of the VWG's in order to give technical guidance to the established VIMUs and DCG's.

Given the complex nature of vulnerability profile development, shortage of trained man power at local levels and limited experience of the country to undertake such activities, the National Guidelines for Vulnerability Profile Development will be a key instrument for ensuring consistency in the process of data collection, data analysis and vulnerability assessment.

Agriculture

Mid-July to mid-August is the peak period for planting *teff*, common fast-maturing, but lower-yielding, cereal crop. The production of *teff*, and other short-cycle cereal crops amounts to about half of the grain produced in the country annually while early planted long-cycle maize and sorghum makes up the remainder. This year, in many parts of the country, in the central parts in particular, where long-cycle maize and sorghum are the predominant crop, many farmers did not plant due to rainfall irregularities at the beginning of the season. In many cases, these farmers planted later in the season using short-cycle but lower-yielding crops such as *teff* or pulses which are expected to benefit from the favourable rainfall experienced by most of the central highlands during August and early September.

Provided the current rains extend through to at least the end of September, except for a few pocket areas this year's *meher* harvest is expected to be generally favourable but still below that of last year. Among the positive factors, it is thought that the outbreak of Armyworm earlier in the growing season did not have a major impact on production, and further outbreaks are unlikely due to heavy rain in the northern highlands. Furthermore, following the almost complete failure of the *belg* rains, farmers demonstrated their ability to adapt to the vagaries of the weather by switching from long-cycle to the more robust short-cycle crops thus increasing their chances of obtaining at least some production this year. On the negative side, the full impact of the failed *belg* rains on main season production is not yet known and in some areas farmers have faced serious shortages of seed as well as plough oxen, the sale of which has been forced by the difficult circumstances faced by many farmers.

Weather

August and September are generally months when rainfall is frequent and heavy, often leading to flooding along the main rivers, particularly along the Awash, Baro and Shebelle river basins. During August this year, with the exception of some areas of north-western Amhara, parts of western and central Oromiya, parts of SNNPR and western Gambella, most *kiremt* benefiting areas experienced normal to above normal rainfall. In addition, localised heavy rain occurred in parts of the central highlands, in some places damaging crops and rendering a number of rural roads in the highlands impassable. In Hararghe, very heavy rain on August 5 resulted in landslides around Deder while heavy rains in central Shewa and along the western escarpment of North Shewa and Welo during the same period contributed to run-off into the Awash River basin and the inundation of low-lying areas in zones 1 and 3 of the Afar region. In the high plateau areas of northern Ethiopia, Welo in particular, farmers suffered water-logging of crops and in some cases were forced to harvest early (the crops being taken for animal fodder).

While northern parts of central, northern and north-western Ethiopia exhibited rainfall generally greater than 100 mm during the first part of August, most of the southern half of the country including the southern half of SNNPR, Borena Zone of Oromiya Region and most of the southern and central Somali Region remained dry. For the lowland, mainly pastoral areas this is considered to be the normal pattern at this time of the year. Meanwhile, in parts of Arsi, East Shewa, the lowlands of Hararghe and Bale and western areas of Oromiya rainfall has been below expectations with a probable negative impact on crop production, grazing and water availability in these areas. There was also a decrease in rainfall observed over Afar, north-eastern Amhara and northern Somali regions. According to the DPPC (Early Warning System report for July/August), in the agro-pastoral areas of the Somali region and the Bale and Borena zones of Oromiya, crops have totally failed due to the poor rains.

From 8-10 September, the fourth Climate Outlook Forum was convened in Diane, Kenya, to reach a consensus on the weather outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa region for the period September to December 1999. Participants included representatives of meteorological services from eight countries in the region, including Ethiopia, and climate scientists and other experts from national, regional and international research institutes. Additional input was provided by the European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts and the Centre for Environmental Prediction in North Carolina, USA. The forum reviewed the state of the global climate system and its implications for the region. Among the principal factors taken into consideration were the slowly redeveloping La Niña episode and near average sea-surface temperatures over the Indian Ocean. Rainfall during the September-December period is considered to have a relatively high predictability over the southern and central parts of the region.

Using the available data and the application current climatic models, the experts predicted a high probability of below-normal rainfall over southern Somalia, south-eastern Ethiopia and the eastern half of Kenya during the coming four month period. Meanwhile, there is an increased probability of near to below normal rainfall over south-western Ethiopia, while northern areas of Ethiopia are expected receive normal to above normal rainfall, principally the result of rainfall in the early part of the period. For the mainly pastoral areas of south-eastern and southern Ethiopia, the short rains that are normally expected during the months of October and November are important for grazing and the replenishment of water sources. Following successive poor rains in recent years, any failure of the rains in the coming months would be expected to lead to the loss of livestock and result in considerable hardship for many people.

Food Aid and Logistics

The current DPPC estimate of food requirements for people affected by drought for the period June to December 1999 stands at 386,586 MT. According to government estimates, the additional food assistance requirement (cereals only) for the 384,858 displaced people in Tigray and Afar regions amounts to approximately 5,508 MT per month.

In response to the critical needs in the most affected areas and in support of the overall government appeal, the World Food Programme launched in June an Emergency Operation (EMOP 6143) for assistance to 1.2 million people in eight regions. The overall donor response to the government's April drought appeal has been very encouraging, with WFP reporting 96 percent of their drought operation now resourced. This follows confirmation in August of a new pledge of 30,000 MT from the European Union. Total pledges for all relief operations in the country (drought and war-displaced), now amount to

404,353 MT. While the pledge situation has shown great improvement, deliveries still lag behind significantly. The current pledging situation is summarised in Table II below:

Table II: Status of pledges against 1999 Food Aid Requirements - Cereals & Pulses
(Covering the Period, January 1 to September 7, 1999)

1999 Pledges	Relief (MT)	Regular (MT)	Monetisation (MT)	EFSR (MT)	TOTAL (MT)
USA	128,110	28,613	21,500	-	178,223
EC	94,629	-	-	50,000	144,629
WFP	137,471	87,918	-	-	225,389
GOE	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
France	-	-	10,000	-	10,000
Netherlands	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
UK	9,000	-	-	-	9,000
Norway	4,143	850	-	-	4,993
Canada	700	3,000	-	-	3,700
Denmark	300	1,500	-	-	1,800
Total	404,353¹⁾	121,881	31,500	50,000	607,734
Deliveries as of 07/09/99	31,023	48,962	21,500	-	101,485

Source: WFP (07/09/99)

Notes

1) In addition, the governments of Italy and China have made cash pledges of US \$1.7 million and \$100,000 respectively.

In the wake of the improved pledge situation, attention has switched to the issue of food availability. To ensure the continuity of ongoing relief operations and to enable a degree of pre-positioning of food to locations inaccessible during the rainy season, considerable use has been made of the National Emergency Food Security Reserve, loans being granted on the basis of guaranteed pledges. According to the most recent figures from the Reserve, grain loans for emergency relief distribution amounting to 132,535 MT were provided to DPPC, WFP and NGOs in the period between April 1 and June 30. Loan repayments during the same period, however, were no more than 28,000 MT and there have been serious concerns that stocks would soon reach a critically low level. The situation, however, now appears to be improving with repayments of around 200,000 MT scheduled to arrive in the coming three months. As of September 8, uncommitted stocks held by the Reserve amounted to 59,428 MT, with a further 48,235 MT in agreed loans under withdrawal and a balance of 226,800 MT in outstanding loans pending repayment.

Apart from continuing concerns regarding targeting of needy beneficiaries and the apparently continuing necessity of employing reduced rations in many areas, the main operational focus for the coming three months will be on the port of Djibouti. According to WFP, food aid shipments amounting to nearly 310,000 MT are expected during this period which will place a heavy strain on port handling facilities as well as the whole transport and delivery chain to regional warehouses and distribution points. Total food aid shipments expected in September is 84,359 MT, the bulk of which will be repayments to the EFSR (73,256 MT). WFP is working closely with Government, NGOs and donors in an effort to co-ordinate arrivals of both food aid, commercial food and fertiliser at the port and reduce congestion to a minimum.

The port of Djibouti has been very quiet in recent weeks, with only one food aid shipment of just under 4,000 MT delivered during August. Meanwhile, during the period from 27 July to 23 August, a total of 21,379 MT of food aid was transported from the port to various destinations within Ethiopia with an average off-take by road and rail of just under 792 MT per day. With port stocks falling rapidly (total food aid in the port as of September 3 was just 1,243 MT), the World Food Programme temporarily released the trucks operating under its Food Aid Transport System (FATS) contracting arrangement. The same trucks are expected to be recalled by the third week of September when the volume of shipments to the port is expected to increase significantly.

The high volume of shipments expected in the coming months has raised concerns that handling facilities at the port as well as trucking capacity in the country will be severely stretched. Vessel and truck turn-around times will need to be minimised if congestion is to be avoided. While most non-WFP shipments

will be taken on direct delivery (trucks loaded from the ship and directly despatched to final destination), WFP will adopt a flexible approach with a combination of direct delivery and off-loading to nearby warehouses for temporary storage when sufficient trucks are not immediately available. Concerned that truck capacity may not be adequate, the National Import-Export Co-ordination Committee has again raised the possibility of using of Adaitu (approximately mid-way between Djibouti and Addis Ababa and at the junction with the main northern route) as a transit point. Adaitu was used last year in order to maximise the availability of trucks at the port. Such an expedient, however, results in significantly higher handling and transport costs.

Building on the success of a 15,000 MT shipment to the "Somaliland" port of Berbera in February, the European Commission has scheduled two further shipments of 16,660 MT and 16,670 MT in October and November, respectively. Despite the lack of modern handling equipment, including bagging machines, observers consider the port capable of discharging vessels at the rate of up to 2,000 MT/day.

Deliveries of food to refugee operations around the country have improved considerably in recent months. Dispatches of August and September rations plus a one month buffer stock have been completed to the Sudanese refugee camps in western Ethiopia. The southern and eastern camps have received all of the August deliveries together with 50 percent and 40 percent of September rations respectively.

A recent new pledge of 10,000 MT from the US government has ensured the continuity of the current WFP operation to provide emergency food rations to a targeted 272,000 war-displaced in Tigray and Afar. A lack of pledges had previously threatened to bring the relief operation to a halt. The new pledge has enabled WFP to secure an agreement to exchange the pledge for locally grown Sorghum which is immediately available. While deliveries to most end distribution points in Tigray have continued throughout the rainy season, deliveries to the western settlement of Bereket are pending because it is inaccessible at present. Meanwhile, WFP is acquiring a warehouse in Mekele in order to tackle the critical storage shortage in and around the town. Further complicating the logistics of the IDP relief operation, deliveries to the north have been disrupted due to the closure of the road at Mersa where a bridge was damaged by flood waters in early September. While light vehicles were able to pass via a temporary diversion, as of 8 September, a backlog of around 150 trucks was reported to be waiting on the southern side of the blockage.

Refugees and Returnees

On 28 July 1999, the last flight organised by UNHCR brought home to Gode and Dire Dawa 118 Ethiopian nationals who had been refugees in camps in Dadaab in north eastern Kenya. With this flight, UNHCR and the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya have assisted a total of 1,378 Ethiopian refugees to return to their areas of origin on a voluntary basis. The last batch of 118 refugees proceeded to various destinations in the Somali National Regional State. Since 1997, UNHCR has undertaken the organised repatriation of over 3,500 Ethiopian refugees to the Somali National Regional State from Kenya.

The refugees were originally displaced into Somalia some two decades ago as a result of the Ogaden war between Somalia and Ethiopia and in 1991 were again displaced to Kenya following the collapse of the Siad Bare regime. The returnees were provided food and non-food items, such as plastic sheets, cooking utensils and jerrycans to help them to settle back into their communities. The World Food Programme provided all the food that was distributed to the returnees.

Having successfully repatriated some 60,000 refugees to North West Somalia in 1998, UNHCR have so far been unable to maintain a similar momentum in the current year. Though now lifted, the halt called by the Hargeisa authorities at the end of last year due to concerns regarding the economy and the capacity of local communities to absorb the newcomers has been the major reason for the late start to operations this year. To date, only 10,500 Somalis have been repatriated and the original target figure for 1999 of 90,000 has been revised to a more realistic 60,000. Repatriation operations are expected to recommence on a large scale once the present rainy season comes to an end in October.

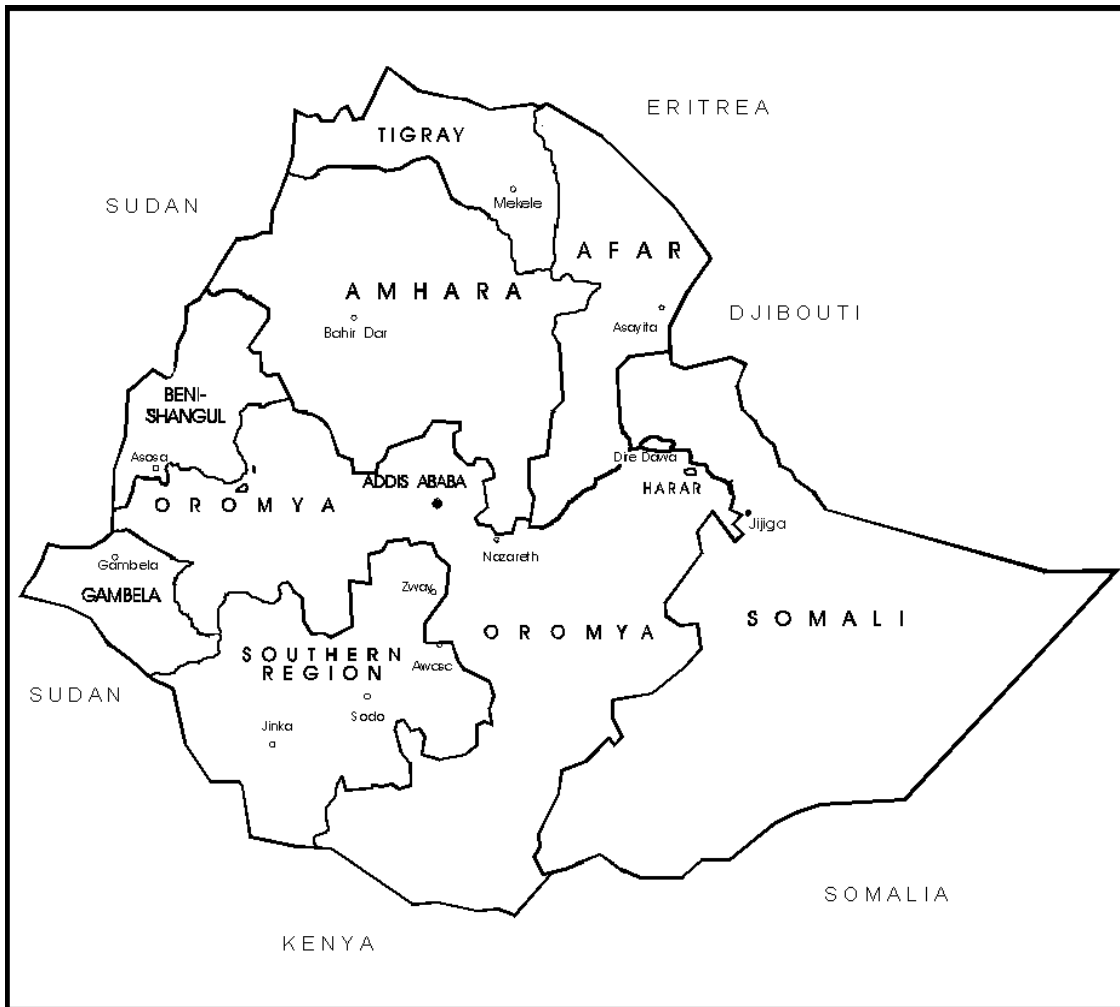
In the west there has been a small but steady influx of new Sudanese refugees with approximately 10,000 newcomers registered since the beginning of the year. Drought and the continuing civil war appear to be the main reasons for the continuing influx. Among the operational challenges facing UNHCR in the western camps is the issue of access to land. For some years, efforts have been made to encourage a greater degree of food self-sufficiency among the refugees who are eager to farm. The main constraint on the programme has been the limited availability of land. UNHCR continues to work with the local and federal authorities to identify additional land for the refugees.

Refugee Statistics as at 1 August 1999

<u>West</u> (Sudanese)		<u>East</u> (Somalis)	
Bonga	13,140	Hartisheik (A & B)	29,535
Fugnido	29,965	Aisha	15,283
Dimma	8,464	Kebribeyah	11,622
Shirkole	16,411	Teferiber	30,444
Sub-total	67,980	Derwenaji	27,017
		Camaboker	28,590
		Rabasso	16,811
<u>South</u> (Kenyans/Somalis)		Daror	33,950
Moyale	4,780	Sub-total	193,252
Dolo*	8,000		
Sub-total	67,980	<u>Addis Ababa</u> (various)	470
		<u>Afar</u> (Djiboutians)	1,099
		GRAND TOTAL	275,581

*Not a formally recognised refugee settlement

Administrative Map of Ethiopia



SOURCES:

UNDP-EUE field reports; Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC); FEWS; National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA); UNHCR; WFP; FAO; UNICEF; EFSRA Newsletter; CARE; SCF (UK); Ogaden Welfare Society; Afar Pastoralists Development Association, Also media sources: The Ethiopian Herald; AFP; Walta Information Centre; ENA.

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