

## MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA SEPTEMBER 1995

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Prepared by the Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia from information provided by UN agencies and NGOS

### OVERVIEW

#### *Emergency operations*

Relief food distributions and a satisfactory *belg* crop have stabilised the food situation in most of the food insecure parts of the country targeted by emergency operations during 1995, including East and West Hararghe zones in Oromia Region and the traditionally vulnerable Welayita area in the Southern Peoples National Regional State. Nevertheless, relief distributions by the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) continue in pockets of high vulnerability in Tigray Region, North Welo, South Welo and North Shewa (Amhara Region) and North Omo (SPNRS).

Field visits and an assessment mission by UN and NGO staff have indicated a deterioration in food security in certain areas of North and South Welo, an area that will still require assistance at least until the end of the year. Several weredas in these zones did not benefit from a good *belg* harvest and sufficient quantities of food could not be prepositioned before they were made practically inaccessible by the main (*kiremt*) rains. With many communities in Welo becoming increasingly dependent on the market for food, cereal prices have risen to very high levels, often beyond the purchasing power of the rural population.

#### *FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission*

The joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Needs Assessment Mission is due to arrive in Ethiopia in November. The mission will be travelling to different parts of the country to evaluate the outcome of the 1995 *Meher* harvest and to make an assessment of cereal production and food import requirements for 1996. It will also be reviewing earlier preliminary pre-harvest assessments. At the same time, the Government has also started reviewing strategy options for implementing relief programmes in 1996.

The FAO/WFP mission's report is expected to be available by mid- December 1995, approximately at the same time that the Government issues its appeal for 1996.

### POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

#### *Relations between Ethiopia and Sudan*

Following the attempted assassination of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt at the end of June 1995, relations between Sudan and Ethiopia have gradually deteriorated. On 1 September, Ethiopia accused Sudan of harbouring three of the suspects in the assassination attempt and reduced the number of Sudanese diplomats in Ethiopia, cancelled all Sudanese flights to Addis Ababa and closed Sudanese affiliated NGOs. However, a Sudanese Government spokesman has stated that the recent incident is the work of sources attempting to undermine Ethio-Sudanese relations. As reported by Sudan, a high

level committee has been established to locate the terrorists involved in the attempt on the Egyptian President's life.

A statement issued by the central organ of the OAU for conflict prevention, management and resolution has condemned the possible harbouring by Sudan of three Egyptian suspects involved in the assassination attempt and has demanded their extradition.

## **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

### *UN support to the revitalisation of IGADD*

The UN Steering Committee and its Technical Working Group, established in Addis Ababa in support of the revitalisation process of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), continued work on various drafts of the guidelines for priority areas of focus, which were then presented to IGADD Secretariat for finalisation. A revised version of the Draft Guidelines was sent by the IGADD Secretariat to member states in mid-September. The UN has also offered to work together with individual member states in preparing the documents on the priority areas of focus as outlined in the Draft Guidelines.

Work on the data base of UN projects in the IGADD countries is also proceeding, with information on the projects implemented in Ethiopia nearly completed. As a future measure, bilateral programmes and NGO projects may also be included. This data base will be a resource tool to assist the UN and others identify gaps, utilise limited resources more effectively and efficiently and, where feasible, consolidate and harmonise programmes in the sub-region. A draft of a "UN Strategy" has also been prepared but will now be revised to clearly indicate a possible "process" for collaboration with IGADD.

### *Capacity assessments*

With relief operations and a satisfactory *belg* harvest helping to improve food availability in most parts of Ethiopia, with the possible exception of certain pocket areas, Government and donors are concentrating efforts on capacity building issues, both in support of local level relief implementation and early warning capacity, and to improve targeting and delivery of relief assistance in the country.

In this regard, a team comprised of representatives from the Commission for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (CDPP - formerly the RRC), line ministries and the UN-EUE is conducting an assessment of the capacity of the government and concerned agencies at various levels to implement the National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management (NPDPM) and the National Programme for Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation (NPDPPM). The assessment will use a sectoral approach, focusing on Early Warning and Employment Generation Schemes (EGS) in the drought prone and food deficit areas of the Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul and Gambella Regions as well as the Southern Peoples National Regional State (SPNRS).

The main objectives of the project are to determine the basic requirements to plan and implement relief plans for 1996, establish a strategy to make the optimal use of existing resources and to elaborate an action plan for enhancing disaster management capacity. In particular, the team will identify the specific problems hindering the implementation of EGS and Early Warning and propose possible solutions.

### *Global 2000 workshop*

A three day workshop organised by the Sasakawa-Global 2000 project was held in Addis Ababa 26-28 September. Entitled "African Agriculture: Achieving Greater Impact from research Investments", the workshop was attended by international researchers, educators and

political leaders from a number of African countries where Global 2000 projects are implemented. The main focus of the meeting, which was also attended by former US President Jimmy Carter and the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, was to discuss the role of new technology in agricultural initiatives in Africa as well as the ways of achieving greater impact from research investment in the agriculture sector.

#### *International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction*

In support for activities undertaken by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), Geneva regarding the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-2000), the Government of Ethiopia has initiated a series of programmes and events in line with this year's IDNDR theme of "Women and Children - Key to Prevention". Four sub-committees have been established by the CDPP to implement the planned activities to raise awareness of the role of women and children in disasters, both as victims and in disaster reduction. These sub-committees are comprised of representatives from the governmental bodies, the donor community, NGOs and the UN system.

The activities to be carried out between the period 7-20 October, with funding support from UNICEF and the Government of the Netherlands, include extensive media coverage, production and dissemination of publications to raise public awareness of the role of women and children in disaster prevention, organisation of one day conferences in three regions (including Addis Ababa) and the organisation of an exhibition by governmental bodies and the international community.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### *Weather update and harvest prospects*

The long (*kiremt*) rains, which had a positive start at the beginning of the main cropping season, continued favourably into September over most *meher*-dependent areas of the country, gradually withdrawing towards the end of the month. Except in a few areas in western and central Ethiopia, including the northern parts of SPNRS, and the north-eastern highlands, weather conditions have been generally good for crop growth.

Preliminary crop assessments carried out by NGOs and the CDPP provide a varying picture of production performance. However, an improved food supply situation is generally predicted for the post harvest period of 1995 in most areas, with the exception of some pockets which are expected to remain vulnerable to food shortages. As accessibility improves with the end of the *kiremt* rains, the most vulnerable weredas are being identified.

The areas with significant production losses are the weredas of Tenta, Mekdela and Legambo in South Welo zone (Amhara Region) and Delanta, Wadla, Meket, Bugna and Gidan in North Welo zone (Amhara Region). A failure in maize and sorghum production has been observed in parts of East and West Hararghe and Arsi zones (Oromia Region). A moderate decrease in production was also noted in Welayita area in North Omo zone, Timbaro area in Kembata zone and Konso, Burji and Derash special weredas of South Omo zone (SPNRS). These weredas are likely to require increased food assistance at least until the end of the year.

### *Pest infestations*

According to FAO, swarms of desert locust have been reported in northern Eritrea and adjacent areas of eastern Sudan, moving away from these areas towards the coastal plains of the Red Sea. Recent reports from the field indicate that swarms have already crossed into northern Ethiopia.

So far, pest damage has not been extensive this year. However, as there is normally a risk of late season pests such as quelea birds, sweet-potato butterfly, stem-borers, African boll-worm, stem rust, Welo bush cricket (affecting wheat, barley and teff), shoot-fly (affecting teff) and even locust, at the end of the *kiremt* rains and before the main harvest, regional bureaux of Agriculture are monitoring crops conditions and mobilising resources to control possible outbreaks.

#### *Fertiliser situation*

As at the end of September, fertiliser sales to both the peasant and state sectors by the Agricultural Input Supplies Corporation (AISCO) and Amalgamated amount to approximately 233,000 tons.

## **FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS**

#### *Food aid status*

As at 29 September, pledges against the 1995 total requirement of 1,032,000 tons amount to 593,243 tons of food aid including commercial, programme and relief/regular categories. The overall pledging situation for the 1995 relief and regular requirements has been very positive, with 410,268 tons pledged out of the total requirements of 427,000 tons for relief and regular programmes, leaving a shortfall of 16,732 tons. No pledges have been made by donors against the government's appeal to monetise 80,000 tons of grain to support employment generation schemes, and a pledging shortfall of 192,025 tons still remains for the 1995 programme food aid requirements. Also, no commercial imports have so far been registered against the commercial cereal import requirements of 150,000 tons.

Total deliveries to Ethiopia by the end of September stand at 168,743 tons or 41% of the pledged quantity against the 1995 relief and regular requirements, whereas final figures on food aid distribution to beneficiaries of relief and regular programmes between January and July 1995 now show a delivery of approximately 208,000 tons. This distribution figure is relatively higher than deliveries to date, as it includes 1994 carry over stocks and loans from the Emergency Food Security Reserve against shipments arriving later in the year.

#### *Relief outlook for 1996*

It is still premature to predict the 1995/96 cereal harvest outlook or next year's food aid requirements before both the Government and FAO/WFP assessment missions take place in the coming months. However, certain assumptions regarding the outlook for relief requirements in 1996 form the basis for early planning for an inevitable 1996 relief intervention:

- This year's *belg* crop, harvested between June and August, is estimated to have been good. More importantly, the main *kiremt* rains followed a regular pattern, extending until the end of September in most of the *meher* producing areas. Fertiliser sales have also been at record high levels and no widespread pest infestations have been reported so far, giving rise to reasonably good expectations for the coming *meher* harvest in November and December. Thus an emergency situation at the scale of 1994 is not anticipated for 1996.
- However, there will be continuing relief needs in the critically food deficit areas - Ethiopia's high population growth, the poor nutritional status of the people, especially the vulnerable groups, and severe poverty ensure that a "normal" harvest is not sufficient to avoid a major relief programme. The annual population growth rate of approximately 3 percent increases the population between 1.5 and 1.7 million people almost every year

and adds some 275,000 to 300,000 tons to the annual cereal and pulse requirements of the country. Estimates by FAO indicate that the average daily calorie intake of the population is only 1,518 per person, far below the medically recommended minimum daily intake of 2,100 calories. Therefore, malnutrition is extremely serious, particularly in the food deficit regions and among the vulnerable groups.

- According to WFP, a very rough estimate is that between 250,000 to 350,000 tons of relief food assistance would be required in 1996. Among those to be targeted are the traditionally vulnerable groups such as the displaced, returnees, women-headed households and children, ex-soldiers and the poorest peasant farmers who have very limited access to cultivable land and insufficient purchasing power to meet their requirements on the market.

#### *Refugee and returnee operations*

WFP report that the pipeline for the refugee programme is gradually improving with the confirmation of donor pledges. However, until these pledges arrive, food distributions in the camps are carried out using grain borrowed from the EFSR.

The current caseload of refugees receiving a monthly food ration provided by WFP is 361,000. This number is slowly increasing as the steady influx of refugees from Sudan and Somalia continues into Ethiopia. In addition, a total of 15,000 Ethiopian refugees returning from Djibouti between July and September have so far been assisted by a WFP arrival and reintegration package.

## **HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WATER**

#### *Rehabilitation of health facilities*

A team of WHO officials travelled to North Welo, South Welo and North Shewa zones (Amhara Region) to review and assess progress on the repair of damaged health facilities in the zones. The mission visited the Dessie health centre in South Welo, Gobiye and Robit health stations in North Welo, Debre Berhan Hospital and Jewuha and Cheki health stations in North Shewa. The maintenance work on the visited facilities has been progressing well. The Dessie health centre is already partly functioning and the Senbete health station is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Discussions were also held with the zonal health officials regarding the general health situation in the zones. Although there are currently no epidemic diseases reported in these areas, there has been some concern in North Welo about the possibility of an outbreak of malaria after the main rains.

#### *Support to health services*

In addition to the regular monitoring of emergency activities throughout the country, UNICEF supported a two-day intensive training programme on supplementary feeding to 21 health workers in South Welo.

A UNICEF mission visited Awash and Shebelle areas to determine the impact of the river flooding in the two locations. Following assessments, supplies of plastic sheeting were provided to the CDPP to be used in assisting flood victims in Awash Valley (Afar Region) and Shebelle Valley (Somali Region).

## **REFUGEES AND RETURNEES**

### *Sudanese Refugees*

The number of assisted Sudanese refugees in three settlement sites in western Ethiopia reached 58,932 with the following breakdown: Bonga 15,589; Fugnido 33,103; Dimma 10,240.

In Dimma settlement site, UNHCR/ARRA were able to identify some 500 unaccompanied minors reportedly not registered so far. UNHCR Mizan is counter-checking the data with Sub-Office Gambella as many of them may already have been registered in Fugnido.

A joint ARRA/UNHCR assessment mission to Dollo/Suftu in the Ethiopian Kenyan border area has confirmed the presence of some 196 asylum seekers from Sudan. All were in good condition. The Ethiopian government has also offered asylum to those who wish to move to the western settlements.

Seven Camp Sadako volunteers from Belgium, United Kingdom and USA returned from Dimma in western Ethiopia after spending one month at the Dimma refugee settlement. The volunteers were part of the Camp Sadako Project, a programme initiated by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees to enable university students from different countries to raise awareness on the plight of refugees through direct exposure with refugees.

Under the guidance of UNHCR/ARRA and other implementing partners, the volunteers were able to work closely with refugees and undertake various tasks in the fields of protection, education, food and non-food items distribution, agriculture, community health and environment during their stay in the settlement.

### *Somali refugees*

The total assisted Somalis in the eight camps remained at 275,189 with the following breakdown: Hartisheik 58,675; Kebribeyah 10,106; Darwanaji 43,008; Teferiber 46,369; Camaboker 31,920; Rabasso 24,865; Daror 44,964; Aisha 15,282.

There was an alleged security concern of Garhajis refugees living in Hartisheik following the killing this month of a Garhajis refugee in the camp. Some Garhajis clan members moved to Kebribeyah from where they asked to be taken to the Aware camps. The situation was reviewed by UNHCR/ARRA in cooperation with the local authorities and the Refugee Committee. ARRA has taken the responsibility to guarantee the security of the Garhajis in Hartisheik.

## **REPATRIATION**

### *Repatriation from Djibouti*

The repatriation operation from Djibouti, which had been interrupted since the end of August 1995, resumed after a month, following agreement UNHCR Djibouti and the Railway Authorities.

A total of 1,111 Ethiopians were repatriated this month. Given there are no interruptions in the operation, the mass repatriation of Ethiopians from Djibouti should be completed around the end of October.

### *Repatriation from Kenya*

The UNHCR Ethiopia Senior Repatriation Officer traveled to Nairobi to update the operations plan for the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopians from Kenya. According to the agreed plan, approximately 4,000 Ethiopians already registered should return to the country by the end of 1995.

#### *Repatriation from Sudan*

While in Khartoum for an Organisation for African Unity (OAU) meeting, the UNHCR Regional Liaison Representative met with UNHCR Sudan and the Sudanese Commission for Refugees to review plans to recommence the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopians from the Sudan, following the end of the rainy season.

#### *Individual repatriation*

Three families comprising of 8 Ethiopian refugees were repatriated individually from various countries: Kenya (6), USA (1), Zaire (1).

#### DISCLAIMER

The designations used above may refer to old regional 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 obtained from specialised UN agencies and NGO reports. Reference is made to any other source of information as necessary.

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**UN-EUE  
PO Box 5580,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Tel.: (251) (1) 51-10-28/29  
Fax: (251) (1) 51-12-92  
Email: [UNEUE@padis.gn.apc.org](mailto:UNEUE@padis.gn.apc.org)**

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