

MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA - OCTOBER 1996

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- No major food crisis have been reported in Ethiopia this year as a result of good domestic food availability combined with relief food distributions targeted to the most vulnerable areas by NGOs and the DPPC.
- A good *meher* harvest is expected in most parts of the country, with the exception of some pocket areas where yield reductions are anticipated.
- The Government's relief appeal for 1997 is expected to be issued in mid-December. The appeal is likely to concentrate on capacity building, although a request for food aid for 1997 for the vulnerable groups seems likely in spite of a good domestic production.
- Deliveries of local purchases are proceeding well; meanwhile, discussions are underway for a new phase (II) of the programme.
- Wholesale prices of cereals have continued to be stable in most marketing centres.
- Preparations are underway for the repatriation of the first 10,000 Somali refugees from Ethiopia to North-west Somalia, expected to start before the end of 1996.

OVERVIEW

A combination of abundant rainfall, timely and well-coordinated relief operations over the past two years and a satisfactory 1995 *meher* harvest followed by an optimal 1996 *belg* season have greatly stabilised the food situation Ethiopia. Even in the traditionally food insecure parts of country, including Tigray Region, North Welo, South Welo and North Shewa zones of the Amhara Region, and Welayita area of North Omo zone (Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples Regional State) overall food security has improved, giving ground for optimistic predictions for 1997. If the level of carry over stocks from 1996 remain as high as anticipated, net food aid requirements in 1997 are likely to remain relatively low. Nonetheless, a realistic picture will only be obtained after the various assessment missions currently in the field have been completed.

A second consecutive year with relatively low emergency food assistance requirements would allow the Government of Ethiopia to concentrate on strengthening the early warning and disaster response and management capacities of local administrations. Support for such capacity building activities is increasing with major contributions already indicated from various donors.

Crop and food needs assessment mission

The Government's food aid needs assessment, coordinated by the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, is currently underway. This assessment is expected to end by 10 November and will estimate the production of the main *meher* cropping season, which is harvested in most parts of Ethiopia by the end of the year, and the 1997 food aid requirements.

Findings of the Government field assessment will also be shared with the joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Needs Assessment Mission, scheduled to be in Ethiopia between 8 and 29 November. As in previous years, the FAO/WFP mission will be traveling to different parts of the country to evaluate the outcome of the 1996 *meher* harvest and to make an assessment of the cereal production, forecast the 1997 *belg* season production and assess the food aid requirements for 1997. Donors and Non-Governmental Organisations involved in food aid and early warning/needs assessment issues in Ethiopia have been invited to join the mission as observers.

Vulnerability assessment

Ongoing food needs assessment missions will be assisted by the collaborative vulnerability assessment of Ethiopia which is being finalised under the umbrella of the DPPC's Early Warning Department and the inter-agency Early Warning Working Group. The objective of the vulnerability assessment is to provide updated information on zones that are particularly susceptible to transitory and chronic food insecurity. It will also examine the main factors behind the vulnerability ratings assigned to various areas of the country.

Government's 1997 Appeal and Capacity Assessment

With relief operations and a satisfactory *belg* harvest helping to improve food availability in Ethiopia, the Government and donors are concentrating efforts on capacity building issues, both in support of local level employment generation schemes and early warning capacity, and to improve targeting and delivery of relief assistance. In addition to the present field assessment of the *meher* harvest (outlined above), a separate mission has been initiated by the DPPC with participation from the European union, USAID, CIDA and UNDP EUE to assess the capacity of the government at various levels to implement the National Policy on Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Management (NPDPPM).

This assessment is a follow-up to the 1996 capacity assessment, and, in addition to reviewing achievements at various levels over the past year, will identify remaining shortfalls and resource requirements for continued planning and implementation of the NPDPPM in 1997. In particular, the study will identify specific problems hindering implementation of Employment Generation Schemes and early warning and, will propose possible solutions for the immediate future. The main capacity building requirements will be incorporated into the 1997 Government appeal, expected to be launched in mid-December.

Food Aid Targeting Study

The special study of food aid targeting in Ethiopia, funded by USAID, Save the Children Fund UK, CARE and the European Union, is nearing completion with all the field work finalised. The study will analyse the various systems currently being used to target Employment Generation Schemes and relief distributions, and will make recommendations on improvements and alternatives. The modalities of the study have included both desk reviews and a series of interviews in the most vulnerable areas of the country.

AGRICULTURE

Meher harvest prospects

The long (*kiremt*) rains, which had a positive start at the beginning of the main cropping season, continued favourably, if somewhat excessively, throughout most *meher*-dependent areas of the country. The rains gradually withdrew in early October, and except a few pocket areas where the negative effects of the unusually heavy rainfall caused floods and waterlogging, weather conditions in most parts of Ethiopia were exceptionally good for crop growth.

The start of the *bega* season or second modal rains, which normally starts in October and ends in January in southern Ethiopia, was also positive and timely. The *bega* season is especially significant in the pastoral areas of the Borena (Oromiya Region) and eastern parts of the Somali Region (Ogaden area) as it greatly contributes to water replenishment and pasture recovery. Crop and pasture conditions have remained good across other pastoral areas of the country.

Fertiliser update

A national fertiliser workshop was organised by the National Fertiliser Industry Agency and the National Fertiliser Project in Addis Ababa, from 15-18 October to review the 1996 fertiliser marketing operation and existing problems and to set the 1997 fertiliser consumption target.

As at the end of September, fertiliser availability for the 1996 agricultural season amounted to over 410,000 tons (including 1996 procurement of 349,000 tons and 1995 carryover stocks of amounting to 61,000 tons). Fertiliser sales have so far reached a total of 260,000 tons sold by Agricultural Inputs Services Corporation (146,000 tons of DAP and Urea), Ambasel (77,000 tons) and Amalgamated (38,000 tons).

Pledges against the 1997 national requirement stand at: Government of Ethiopia 100,000 tons; Government of Germany 120,000 tons; International Development Agency 50,000 tons. Available pledges of 270,000 tons together with expected 1996 carry over of 140,000 bring fertiliser availability in 1997 to a total of 410,000 tons. The German pledge allocated for use by AISCO has already been tendered. There have also been indications of pledges from the governments of Italy and the Netherlands. Pledges so far, together with an anticipated 1996 carry over, places fertiliser availability for the coming year at a very high and comfortable level, much above the expected 1997 consumption target of 400,000 tons.

Discussions are underway for the removal of the fertiliser subsidy for Ethiopia. However, a decision in this regard remains pending further studies and evaluation by the Government and FAO under the National Fertiliser Industry Programme. The 1996 fertiliser subsidy was set at 50 Ethiopian Birr per quintal (approximately \$8.00).

Pest infestations

According to FAO, pest damage has not been extensive this year. However, there is normally a risk of late season pests such as quelea birds, sweet potato butterfly, stem-borers, African bollworm, 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.

Control operations against large populations of quelea birds in the Jijiga area were successfully completed in early October. Operations are expected to now move to adjacent areas along the Rift Valley (Zway), Gama Gofa, Eastern Hararghe and North Shewa (Shewa Robit), where additional outbreaks have been reported. Surveys will also continue in controlled regions in case of future recurrence of infestation.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Care Ethiopia assessment in East Shewa, East and West Hararghe

A mid-season crop assessment was carried out by CARE Ethiopia on the overall condition of the *meher* season and crop performance in its operational areas of East Shewa and East and West Hararghe zones of the Oromiya Region.¹ In general, good crop production has been forecasted in the three zones, with the exception of pocket areas where poor crop performance was observed at both flowering and germination stages due to the effects of erratic rainfall, soil erosion and crop infestations.

According to the assessment report, the situation in most parts of East Shewa was satisfactory and the performance of maize and teff has generally been good. In West Hararghe, the *meher* performance has been average and above average in the highland, midland and lowland areas. However, maize and sorghum crops, particularly in Adama and Boset weredas (East Shewa), some highland and midland areas of Tullo, Chiro and Guba Koricha weredas (West Hararghe), Burka and the lowland and midland areas of Grawa, Bedeno and Kurfachalle weredas (East Hararghe) have exhibited below average performance as a result of irregular rainfall patterns, waterlogging, hailstorms, floods and soil erosion. A significant infestation of the Coffee Berry Disease (CBD) was also observed in all coffee growing areas of East and West Hararghe, which may result in up to 35% reduction in coffee production in the two zones.

The physical condition of livestock was found to be normal and water and pasture are adequately available for livestock in East Shewa, East and West Hararghe zones.

EUE field mission to North Omo zone (SNNPRS)

A recent EUE mission report to North Omo zone of the SNNPRS, a traditionally food insecure and vulnerable area of the country, presents a disparate picture in the weredas of Kindo Koisha, Sodo Zuria, Boloso Sore and Offa. Although some yield reduction was registered from the *belg* harvest and a less than optimal *meher* harvest may be expected, primarily due to unexpected, excessive and prolonged rains, the situation in North Omo is generally better this year.

In Kindo Koisha, *meher* crop performance was positive and teff, wheat, barley and pulses were at the flowering stage. In Sodo Zuria, although initial crops planted earlier in the season were adversely affected by excessive rains, hailstorms and landslides, many areas were replanted and are progressing well. The progress of the *meher* season was slightly slow in Boloso Sore and Offa weredas, but teff fields are at their flowering stage and expected to be harvested from early November onwards. Pasture and water availability are also good in all weredas.

¹ The assessment covered Adama and Boset weredas (East Shewa); Babile, Bedeno, Burka, Gerwa, Gursum and Kurfachalle weredas (East Hararghe); and Doba, Tullo, Chiro, Kuni, Habro, Bokie, Guba Koricha, Daro Lebu and Mieso weredas (West Hararghe).

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food aid status

Relief and regular food aid pledges amount to a comfortable 216,130 tons against a requirement of 152,386 tons. Of the pledges for relief and regular programmes, 86,825 tons (including combined imports and the local purchase by Euronaid) have so far been delivered. Pledges against the 100,000 tons cereal requirement for the Emergency Food Security Reserve remain at 95,750 tons.

Food aid distributions

Food distributions are continuing for the most vulnerable population groups in the traditionally food insecure North and South Welo (Amhara Region), Eastern and Southern Tigray, North Omo zone (SNNPRS) and parts of East and West Hararghe zones (Oromiya Region). Between January and September, the DPPC and NGOs distributed/prepositioned a total of 232,000 tons to the most food insecure population groups. On average, about 23,500 tons of grain per month is being distributed, a figure only slightly below last year's average monthly level.

According to WFP, the slow delivery of 1996 food aid pledges (86,825 tons so far) has not affected availability of food for relief distribution. The amount of food distributed between January and August exceeds the amount of food delivered to Ethiopia mainly because relief organisations have used, in addition to 1996 deliveries, the large 1995 carry over stocks (estimated at 140,000 tons), 1995 carry over pledges (over 28,000 tons) and loans from the Emergency Food Security Reserve.

EFSR storage capacity

The Emergency Food Security Reserve currently has in-country stocks of about 157,881 tons in the various warehouses with the following breakdown: Nazareth 30,650 tons; Shashemane 19,918 tons; Kombolcha 70,919 tons; Mekele 35,500 tons; and Dire Dawa 794 tons. In addition, the reserve has close to 109,500 tons in outstanding loans from the DPPC, WFP, EGTE and NGOs.

Given the imminent possibility of congesting the storage capacity of the EFSR, the Government recently allocated funds for the Reserve to increase its current capacity in order to accommodate remaining European Union deliveries of over 17,000 tons and loan repayments from the coming harvest. However, the issue of what type of grain these loans should be repaid in is more complex, as it relates both to the preferred composition of the stock of the EFSR and the characteristics of national grain production (in which maize accounts for 24%, wheat 19% and sorghum for 18%). The commodity mix of the EFSR, following completion of ongoing local purchases by European Union and Euronaid, presently stands at approximately: maize 15%, wheat 78% and sorghum 7%.

1996 local purchase programme

Deliveries of the European union local purchase of 75,000 tons for the EFSR are progressing well, with over 58,500 tons already delivered at warehouses. Delivery of the 33,000 tons of sorghum locally purchased by Euronaid for the EFSR and the Relief Society of Tigray has progressed on schedule and was completed in October.

The next phase of the local purchase programme in Ethiopia will consist of some 16,000 tons allocated to the WFP refugee programme, 8,193 tons purchased by the European Union for the EFSR and 6,356 tons purchased by Euronaid for various NGOs, all of which are likely to be tendered before the end of the year.

Discussions are also underway with the Government regarding Phase II of the local purchase programme, for the purchase of 78,000 tons, most of which would be repayment to the EFSR.

Market prices and trends

As reflected in the October report of Market Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (MEDaC), wholesale prices in Addis Ababa show a greater tendency to fluctuate than other markets. Prices both in deficit markets such as Dire Dawa and Mekele, and surplus centres like Bale Robe and Hossana, however, have not shown much change, either staying flat or increasing only marginally.

Barley and wheat prices registered a relative increase at the end of September, an upsurge that may have been influenced by the normally high national consumption during the two Ethiopian holidays in the month of September (New Year and Meskel). Maize prices did not show major changes in September and early October, with the exception of Nekempt where a ten percent rise was registered.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Epidemics

Malaria outbreaks are still causing serious concern in many parts of the country, with the number of cases diagnosed rapidly increasing over the past month. The highest incidence has so far been reported in South Omo zone of the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Regional State and along the Awash river in eastern Oromiya Region. Outbreaks have also been reported in Bahir Dar and several lowland areas throughout the country. Drug availability seems to be satisfactory with the provision of both first line drugs of chloroquine phosphate and primaquine and second line drugs of quinine and fancidar².

Nutritional status

A recent nutritional survey carried out by Save the Children (UK) in their operational areas of Eastern and Southern zones of Tigray shows the nutritional status has remained stable throughout the survey area. The exception to the overall positive trend is Raya Azebo wereda, where food stocks have been depleting and the nutritional level has declined notably since mid-year. The report stresses that, even in the better areas, there is unlikely to be significant improvement in the present nutritional status in the absence of continued food assistance.

Surveys were also carried out by SCF in Western Hararghe (Oromiya Region) and North Shewa (Amhara Region). Preliminary results of the survey in West Hararghe indicate that the nutritional level has reversed its previous downward trend of earlier in the year and is now generally improved. In North Shewa, SCF have reported satisfactory nutritional status in Antsokiya, Mama Mider, Lalo Mider, Gera Mider, Keya Gebriel and Gishe.

Emergency water supply to Gode town

A recent field assessment by UNICEF to Gode zone (Ethiopian Somali Region) has indicated that 85% of the joint UNICEF/Swiss Disaster Relief project for the establishment of a water supply system in Gode town (Phase I) has been completed. With the implementation of the

² A list of anti malaria drugs provided to the zonal bureaux of health can be obtained from UNICEF.

project progressing well, the main issue of concern is the general administration of the system and accessibility of the local community to existing facilities.

REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

Refugee/returnee statistics³

Sudanese refugees: The number of assisted Sudanese refugees in three settlement sites in western Ethiopia reached 72,533 with the following breakdown: Bonga 17,022; Dimma 12,267; and Fugnido 43,264. Re-registration of refugees in the west is currently being planned.

Somali refugees: The total assisted Somalis in the eight camps reached 287,482 with the following breakdown: Hartisheik 58,708 ; Kebribeyah 10,299; Darwanaji 43,006; Teferiber 46,379; Camaboker 31,932; Daror 45,011; Rabasso 24,865; Aisha 15,282; and an additional 12,000 (unregistered and unassisted).

A UNHCR mission recently visited the eastern refugee camps to review the general health situation, over which much concern has been expressed. A mission from the European Commission for Humanitarian Operations (ECHO) is also expected to visit Ethiopia to assess the situation in the east and possibilities for future funding.

Other refugees: A total of 15,000 Somali refugees are currently unassisted in Dollo; 8,671 Kenyan refugees are assisted Moyale and Dokisso areas; 18,000 Djiboutian refugees are assisted in the Afar Region and 722 urban refugees receive assistance in Addis Ababa.

Refugee pipeline

WFP report that the pipeline for the refugee programme is sufficient only for distributions until early December. The current caseload of refugees receiving a monthly ration provided by WFP is: 275,813 Somali refugees; 63,545 Sudanese refugees; 18,000 Djiboutian refugees; and 8,671 Kenyan refugees.

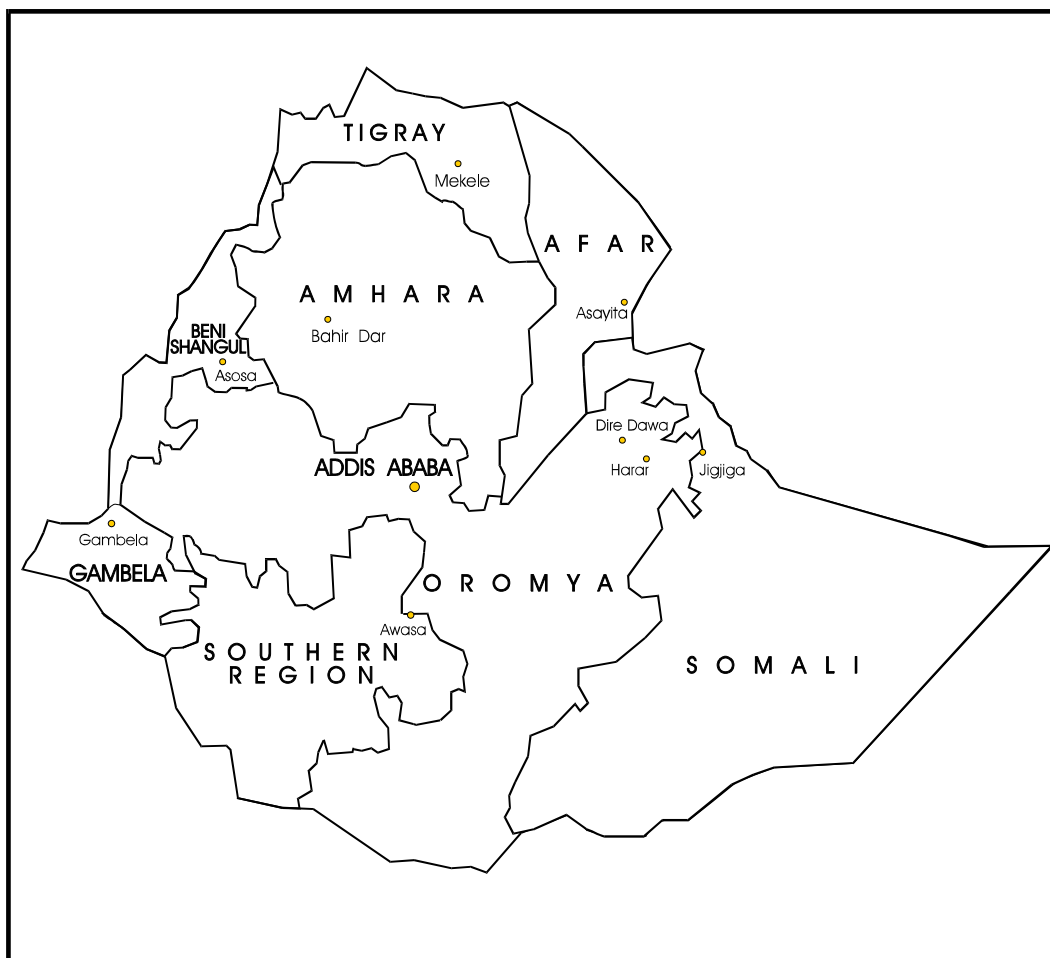
REPATRIATION

Repatriation to Somalia

Preparations are underway for the repatriation of the Somali population who have expressed an interest in being repatriated to North-west Somalia. According to UNHCR, of the initial target of 10,000 so far 2,005 people have been registered. The main issue pending at the present time is the food distribution mechanism during this phase of the operation.

Administrative Map of Ethiopia

³ Source: UNHCR refugee statistics and registration by site as of 31 September 1996. Total of refugees in Ethiopia stands at 402,217



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SOURCES:

UNDP/EUE field reports; CARE; Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission; European Union; FAO; FEWS; National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA); Ministry of Agriculture; SCF (UK); UNICEF; UNHCR; WFP; WHO.

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