

## MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA October 1997

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

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Unseasonal rain fell over much of the central highlands during October raising concern for the *mehar* harvest now underway. To help determine the impact on crops and food security, the DPPC ordered its pre-harvest assessment teams to remain in the field for two/three weeks longer than originally planned;
- Exceptionally heavy rainfall and high river levels have caused extensive flood damage in parts of Southern and South-Eastern Ethiopia. In the border district of Afder, in the Somali region, some 2,579 families were forced to flee their homes in the face of extensive local flooding while along the Shebelle river more than 40 villages were inundated when the river broke its banks;
- Fertilizer sales targets for the coming year have been set at 98,000 tons for Urea and 270,000 tons for DAP with projected availability looking very favourable based on estimates of the carry-over stock and current import schedule;
- FAO and WFP will be mounting their annual Joint Food Needs and Crop Production Assessment Mission in early November. The mission will adopt the same basic methodologies as in previous years and is expected to deploy up to ten field teams to conduct rapid assessments of production and food needs in some 38 zones around the country;
- After some delays due to logistical and other difficulties, the long-awaited revalidation exercise in the eastern refugee camps has been scheduled to take place in early November.

### GENERAL EVENTS

***New banknotes for Ethiopia:*** Ethiopia is introducing new Birr notes in order to avoid any complications and difficulties that might arise from the fact that Eritrea is about to launch its own new currency, the "Nakfa". The new banknotes are designed to reflect the current political reality, omitting symbols and slogans used in the past and showing the map of Ethiopia without the territory of Eritrea. Redemption of the old bank notes began on 8 November at all government and private banks throughout the country. The redemption of the 50 and 100 Birr notes is limited to a period of 21 days while the exchange period for the other denominations is scheduled to last 50 days. The exchange rate of the new against the old Birr is one to one.

***New leader for Somali region:*** The council of the Ethiopian Somali National Regional State elected in mid-October a new 21-member executive committee, including the head of the Regional State. The new leader is Mohamed Mealin Ali-Kedir, a member of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), while Riale Hamed of the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League was elected deputy. Id Tahir, the former head of the Regional State, had resigned following a dispute with the former executive committee.

***Obelisk to return soon:*** The National Committee for the Return of the Axum Obelisk announced that the historic treasure standing in Rome since the years of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia is expected to be returned to the country in April next year. The Obelisk, weighing 160 tons, will be flown back in pieces and re-erected at its original site in Axum by the Italian International Technical Institute in cooperation with Ethiopian scientists and experts.

**Germany cancels 40 million dollar debt:** The government of Germany has canceled a debt of 39.8 million dollars owed by Ethiopia. Of the total loan canceled, 16 million dollars was a debt owed to former East Germany for purchasing weapons. The remaining 23.8 million was a debt that was supposed to have been paid by 1997. Ethiopia owed Germany before the debt cancellation a total of 51.6 million dollars. The remaining debt of 11.8 million is payable within 23 years with a grace period of six years included.

**Billions of Birr in tax arrears:** The Minister of the Federal Revenue Board said development enterprises are in arrears of taxes amounting to 1.8 billion Birr. The Addis Ababa Administration, however, had earlier announced that a sum amounting to 12 billion Birr which should have been paid by enterprises over the past three years has not yet been collected.

**Large scale deforestation:** Ethiopia is said to be losing its natural forest at an estimated rate of 200,000 hectares per annum. A senior expert with the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (MEDaC) revealed that the depletion is continuing unabated driven by demands for fuelwood, construction materials and farmland. Re-forestation efforts being made in the country are not proportional to the magnitude of forest destruction, the expert stated.

**Need for agricultural information system:** Speaking at a four-day workshop at Africa Hall in Addis Ababa, Ethiopian Agriculture Minister Seyfu Ketema said the establishment of a national agricultural information system is an absolute necessity in order to collect, process, store and to provide to users timely, comprehensive and reliable agricultural information.

## AGRICULTURE

### Current situation

When the *kiremt* (main) rainy season ended on time around the end of September it was generally felt that while a number of traditionally food deficit areas had suffered very badly from erratic and insufficient rains over the last four months the main agricultural areas would probably have a fairly good crop - perhaps not as good as the bumper harvest of 1996 but at least as good as 1995. However, beginning mid October there were extensive and highly unseasonal rains over much of the country — rains that continued until almost the end of the month.

The impact of this unseasonal weather is extremely difficult to gauge as some areas and/or crops will benefit from the extension of the rainy season while other areas or crops will be adversely affected. On the positive side, crops which were planted late because of either the poor *belg* or of the late onset of the main rainy season will benefit from the additional moisture. Also, although these untimely rains will have little impact on crops in the drought affected areas, they will have a major and very positive impact on the regeneration of pasture and ground water resources. The negative impact of the rains may be more difficult to quantify but current concerns center around: the impact on *teff*, a local grass-like grain very susceptible to lodging; the spread of blights and fungus on other cereal crops; possible delays in harvesting; and, the potential for increased post-harvest losses if grain is harvested damp.

### El Niño and Ethiopia

The El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is considered by scientists to be the most important ocean-atmospheric phenomenon affecting weather variability on a global scale. El Niño is a cyclical upwelling of unusually warm water in the Pacific ocean off the coasts of Ecuador and Peru that takes place every two to seven years. The Southern Oscillation is “a seesaw of atmospheric pressure between the eastern equatorial Pacific and Indo-Australian area” and is closely linked with El Niño. El Niño years are typically characterised by extreme weather conditions in the Pacific basin with drought in some parts and severe tropical storms in others. Studies conducted by climatologists have also shown a correlation between El Niño events and anomalous weather patterns as far away as the Indian sub-continent and southern Africa.

While the current El Niño event is viewed as possibly the most significant this century, there remains considerable controversy over its relevance and impact on weather patterns over the Horn of Africa

and Ethiopia. The following is one view which has been taken from a recent report issued by the DPPC:

“El Niño episodes seem to be associated with drought occurrences in Ethiopia. The association has been recognised by the National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA) for several years now and El Niño information is included in making seasonal forecasts. As a result, the quality of the forecasts has greatly improved... The areas particularly affected during El Niño years are Eastern and Southern Tigray, North Welo, South Welo and North Shewa. During the main rainy season (*kiremt*) the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) runs north-south along the Ethiopian escarpment. Generally, areas to the west of the ITCZ get rain and those to the east do not. A west shift of the position of the ITCZ could easily explain the drought-prone nature of these areas of the country while the western parts of the country are not affected.”

The report goes on to emphasise that more work is required to establish just how an El Niño event affects weather patterns in Ethiopia. Among the questions that need to be answered are: How does the strength and position of the Tropical Easterly Jet (TEJ) during El Niño years compare with non El Niño years? What is the effect on the strength and depth of the low level south-westerly winds that supply moisture to Ethiopia? Does the El Niño influence the African Easterly Jet (AEJ)? Does the El Niño phenomena affect both *belg* and *kiremt* rains? With limited resources, the NMSA has begun to address some of these questions but support for further research is urgently needed.

### **Fertilizer**

At the Fertilizer Committee Meeting, now co-chaired by FAO and NFIA (National Fertilizer Industry Agency), held on 29 October the Marketing Development Department of NFIA presented their “Review of the 1997 Fertilizer Supplies Distribution and Sales”. According to this report, out of 320,229 tons of fertilizer available for 1997, 264,122 tons had been distributed by the end of August 1997; however total sales at the end of August amounted to only 206,294 tons, a reduction of 46,858 tons (18.5%) compared to sales in 1996. According to NFIA’s field assessment, the decrease in fertilizer sales is primarily due to the following factors:

- The erratic nature of the rainfall this year, particularly during the *belg* season, affected fertilizer sales in almost all regions;
- In addition to the denial of credit this year to farmers who had not repaid previous years loans, some farmers refused or were unable to pay the 25% advance payment required in Oromiya region, the major fertilizer consuming region of the country (The original sales target of Oromiya region was 47%). Although this 25% advance payment requirement was lifted later in the year, sales remained below target;
- The removal of the fertilizer subsidy and subsequent increase in prices combined with the relatively low price of grain in the early part of the year also contributed to low fertilizer sales figures this year.

Sales targets for the 1998 cropping season have been fixed at 98,000 tons of Urea and 270,000 tons of DAP for a total of 368,000 tons. After deducting about 110,000 tons of carry-over stocks from 1997 to 1998, the net import requirement is 258,000 tons; however, the quantity already under what NFIA terms “Progress of Import” exceeds this amount by 38,808 tons.

## FLOODS

Although the rains normally withdraw from the highlands in October, this is the normal period for the short rains in the lowlands of Southern and South-Eastern Ethiopia, including much of the Ethiopian Somali National Regional State. Last year these rains were extremely poor and much of this area suffered from severe drought. This year, the rains began on time and have been unusually heavy and many areas have been badly affected by flooding. First hit was the Dollo area near Ethiopia's border with Kenya and Somalia where an estimated 15,000 displaced people from Somalia and other areas have set up temporary camps. According to the local administration, the flooding forced 2,579 families in the district to leave their homes and seek shelter on higher ground. The floods also destroyed some 362 hectares of irrigated farmland planted with maize, fruit and vegetables and caused the loss of numerous water pumps. UNHCR in cooperation with WFP and the DPPC organized an assessment mission by air to the area on 30 October and as a follow-up to this mission UNHCR have donated 500 tents to families who had lost their homes in the flooding.

At about the same time, the Wabe Shabele river broke its banks inundating and isolating up to 40 agro-pastoral villages downstream of Gode. Particularly badly hit has been the town of Mustahil about 150 kms downstream of Gode where virtually the entire population had to seek shelter in the surrounding hills. The DPPC, with the cooperation of the local military, organized a helicopter assessment on 2 November and followed this up with several relief flights of shelter materials and high protein biscuits using an Ethiopian Airlines Hercules from Dire Dawa to Gode. As much of the area remains cut off, the military have agreed to provide a helicopter to assist with the onward distribution. The new Regional President also visited the area from 7 November onwards.

Although the unusually heavy rains have caused the loss of property and livestock as well as a number of deaths, in the long term they could be very beneficial to the regeneration of pasture land and water points. Also, once the water recedes there is excellent potential for flood recession agriculture if the affected communities still have maize or sorghum seeds.

## FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

### Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR)

The EFSR continues to play an extremely important role in meeting emergency relief needs and over the last three months, in spite of low stocks and limited pledges, the Reserve has loaned out over 80,000 tons. Prompt loan repayments, however, remain of critical importance if the Reserve is to fully meet the kind of heavy demands placed on it over the last year.

As of 20 October 1997 the EFSR reported the following overall stock position:

	(metric tons)
Stock at Hand	82,972.10
Expected Deliveries	38,199.83
Under withdrawal	29,087.84
Outstanding loans	156,692.33
Unpaid balance from recycling	46.00
Unpaid balance from swapping	<u>2.50</u>
TOTAL	307,000.60

(Source: EFSRA Newsletter, October 1997)

Although the physical stocks available at the beginning of the new year will depend on actual ship arrivals as well as any new withdrawals that might be made over the next two months, it is still estimated that actual stocks at the end of December will be around 125,000 tons, well below the optimum considering that generally, in-country carry-over stocks are likely to be very low this year.

## Food and Logistics

Cereal and pulse relief pledges against the 1997 DPPC appeals jumped during the month of October with the confirmation of various notional pledges and the announcement of several new pledges. According to a report issued by WFP on 28 October, the status of relief pledges (cereals and pulses only) was as follows:

Donor	tons
EC	35,000
USA	64,731
WFP	60,400 <sup>1</sup>
Canada	3,100
Germany	4,550
UK	8,000
Norway	8,429
Greece	5,000
Caritas Network	1,550
Ireland	800
OPEC	<u>760</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192,320</b>

Comment:

1) EMOP 5831 - 8,240 Norway, 5,000 EC, 4075 Canada, 3,339 Germany, 3,000 UK, 1,546 Sweden  
EMOP 5886 - 8,000 Australia, 6,000 Sweden, 6,000 IRA, 15,200 Donors to be announced

With the announcement of new pledges and the confirmation of previously announced notional pledges, the percentage of deliveries against pledges dropped during the month of October and now stands at about 25%. The tentative shipping schedule for the remainder of the year and the first quarter of 1998 for carry-over pledges and confirmed new emergency pledges for all commodities is as follows (in metric tons):

Month	Donor	Commodity	Assab	Djibouti
November	CFGB	wheat	2,400	
November	NCA	wheat	1,452	
November	USA	wheat	20,000	
November	WFP	wheat	4,017	22,251
December	Greece	wheat	5,000	
December	WFP	wheat		11,614
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>32,869</b>	<b>33,865</b>
January 1998	Euroaid "A"	wheat	22,689	
1st quarter 1998	Euroaid "B"	wheat	23,000	
1st quarter 1998	WFP	wheat	15,200	30,970
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>60,889</b>	<b>30,970</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>93,758</b>	<b>64,835</b>

Source: WFP Ethiopia Food Aid Status, 28/10/97 & EURONAIID, 13/11/97

Of the November/December expected arrivals, a significant portion will go directly to the Emergency Food Security Reserve as repayments for previous loans.

## Local purchase programme

The 1997 local purchase programme is nearing completion and at the end of October WFP reported roughly 79,000 tons had been delivered by various suppliers with approximately another 10,000 tons

due by the end of the year. The WFP local purchase programme, which was by far the largest this year mainly involved some 83,000 tons of cereals — 3,000 tons of which was used in 5,600 tons of locally produced blended foods — 4,200 tons of pulses and 570 tons of salt.

### **Assessment missions**

The DPPC, in conjunction with the UN system, NGOs and interested donors, fielded thirteen assessment teams during October to collect pre-harvest production estimates as well as estimates of relief needs for 1998. Originally the teams were to be in the field about three weeks, returning to Addis Ababa in the last week of October, so that they would be in a position to brief the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Needs Assessment Mission scheduled to arrive about 4 November. However, because of the untimely rains from mid- to end October, the DPPC, following instructions from the Council of Ministers, ordered the teams to remain in the field for an additional two to three weeks to assess the impact of these rains. Although both government and donors remain deeply concerned about any adverse effects, it may not be possible to measure the true impact of these unseasonable rains on production until later in November and the impact on post harvest losses may not be known until next year.

The untimely rains will also make the job of the FAO/WFP Assessment Mission much more difficult as their field work will also take place in early November and the rains will add many new variables to an already difficult and complex process. In spite of these difficulties the mission plan to adopt the same basic methodology of rapid rural appraisal as they have used in the last three years and over a 12 to 14 day period they plan to visit 38 zones. The four FAO teams will be composed of two consultants from FAO Rome, two local consultants and up to 4 representatives from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture while WFP, which will concentrate on the food deficit areas, will have 6 teams led by one person from WFP Rome, WFP staff from the Ethiopia office and representatives from NGOs and the donor community. The FAO teams will deal primarily with the zonal agricultural teams while the WFP teams' main point of contact will be with the zonal and wereda administration and DPPC representatives at the zonal level.

On their return to Addis Ababa around 20 November both missions will continue their detailed discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, DPPC, other Ministries and the donor community.

### **Grain prices**

During the first week of October, probably in expectation of good harvests in the main production areas as well as merchants disposing of old stocks in anticipation of the new harvest, there was a dramatic increase in grain flows both into the Addis Ababa market (a 57% increase over the previous week) and into the 26 main market towns (140%) surveyed by the Grain Market Research Project. Although flows increased, prices, aside from maize producer prices in the observed markets which declined by 16.9%, did not show the changes that would normally be associated with such dramatic flow increases and remained significantly higher than a year ago. This trend continued during the second week of October with flows increasing, although not as dramatically as during the first week, and only slight variations in prices. However, during the third week of October, perhaps in reaction to the untimely rains over many of the main producing areas of the country, the Grain Market Research Project reported that grain flows into the Addis Ababa market decreased and that there was an unexpected 22% increase in maize prices. In the 26 main market towns monitored by the Grain Market Research Project changes were less significant but there were still unexpected declines in maize and sorghum flows into these markets. Also unexpected was a 9.4% increase in the price of sorghum over the previous week. By the fourth week of October, with a few exceptions, both flows and prices began to follow a more normal pattern but in Addis Ababa average nominal wholesale prices still remained about 31% higher than a year ago.

At the moment the rather unusual patterns of both grain flows and prices are probably due to problems of access to markets because of the untimely rains; however, as concern grows about possible damage to un-harvested crops by the unseasonable rains these unusual fluctuations may

continue and grain prices may not decline as they usually do during the months of November and December.

## **HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WATER**

### **Highlights**

*Anti-polio campaign to start soon:* The Minister of Health, Dr. Aden Ibrahim, has announced that preparations are in hand for the launching of a nationwide anti-polio vaccination programme. It is planned that 8.6 million children under the age of five years will be vaccinated in two rounds to be conducted from the country's 26,000 health posts during the months of November and December. Of the total planned vaccination sites, 4,330 are static facilities, 12,249 are outreach stations and 8,908 will be temporary sites established specifically for this campaign.

*Maternity related death rate one per cent:* Out of 100,000 women in the child-bearing age group, some 1,000 die each year of complications related to pregnancy and child-birth, an official of the Ministry of Health has disclosed, adding that the major reasons behind the death toll are low health service coverage, early marriage and illegal abortion.

### **Response to the appeal of April 1997**

The Ministry of Health submitted an appeal document to donors in April 1997. Based on this appeal WHO made available US \$150,000 for the purchase of emergency health kits. 11 health kits—which will be enough for a population of 110,000 for three months—arrived during October. The Ministry of Health is currently clearing the items. In addition to this, funds for recruitment of three short term consultants to support the health sector in emergency management has been made available by WHO which is now waiting for the response of the Ministry of Health on the selection and deployment of the consultants.

### **Plan of action for health emergency intervention in the Horn Of Africa**

A joint mission to the Horn of Africa met in Addis Ababa from 6 to 10 October 1997. The mission members were drawn from the country office, regional offices and headquarters of WHO as well as from the Italian Cooperation office. The group developed a plan of action for emergency interventions in the Horn of Africa which will run through 1998. When this initiative is finalized seven countries of the Horn will benefit. Through the initiative an estimated 1 million US dollars has been earmarked to:

- Improve the managerial capacity of the health workers in broader areas in dealing with identified diseased;
- Improve the coverage and utilization of the health services;
- Make operational the timely and coordinated planning, early warning and response to epidemics;
- Adopt a protocol of collaboration.

## **REFUGEES AND RETURNEES**

### **Revalidation**

The long-awaited revalidation exercise in the Somali refugee camps in South-Eastern Ethiopia has been scheduled to take place during the early part of November. The delays have been due to a number of logistical problems in organising what is a highly complex undertaking and concerns over security. The revalidation exercise, which will help determine the number of refugees requiring material assistance, is a joint operation between UNHCR, ARRA and WFP.

### Refugee statistics and registration

The refugee population in Ethiopia by site as at end of September 1997 stood as follows:

<u>East</u> (Somali)		<u>West</u> (Sudanese)	
Aisha	15,282	Bonga	11,818
Camaboker	36,120	Dimma	7,436
Daror	49,355	Fugnido	17,847
Dharwanaji	40,601	Shirkole	<u>17,590</u>
Hartisheik	53,760		
Kebribeyah	10,445	TOTAL	54,691
Rabasso	28,381		
Teferiber	<u>43,818</u>		
TOTAL	277,762		

#### South (Kenyans)

Moyale 8,671 (Based on a registration by ARRA in November 1994. Since then figures remained static)

#### North East (Djiboutians)

Afar Region 8,000 (Estimate presently used by WFP for food allocation. Spontaneous departures are not recorded)

Addis Ababa 756 (Urban refugees)

**GRAND TOTAL = 349,880**

### Registration of Afar Refugees

Upon completion of the revalidation exercise in the eastern camps, UNHCR plans to undertake a registration exercise of some 8,000 Djiboutian refugees currently settled in the Afar region (north east) of Ethiopia. This will enable UNHCR and WFP to target proper assistance to this caseload. The Djiboutian refugees are currently receiving food assistance from WFP.

### Voluntary repatriation

As a follow-up to the pilot voluntary repatriation movement of Somali refugees from the eastern camps in Ethiopia to North-West Somalia, which was completed successfully in July 1997, UNHCR plans to commence a new programme for the assisted voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees during the third week of November 1997. So far, an estimated 30,000 refugees have registered to be repatriated



through the new project. The administration in North-West Somalia has indicated their readiness to receive this number of returnees before the end of 1997 and another 60,000 in 1998. UNHCR will furnish the refugees with transport assistance and WFP will provide a food package.

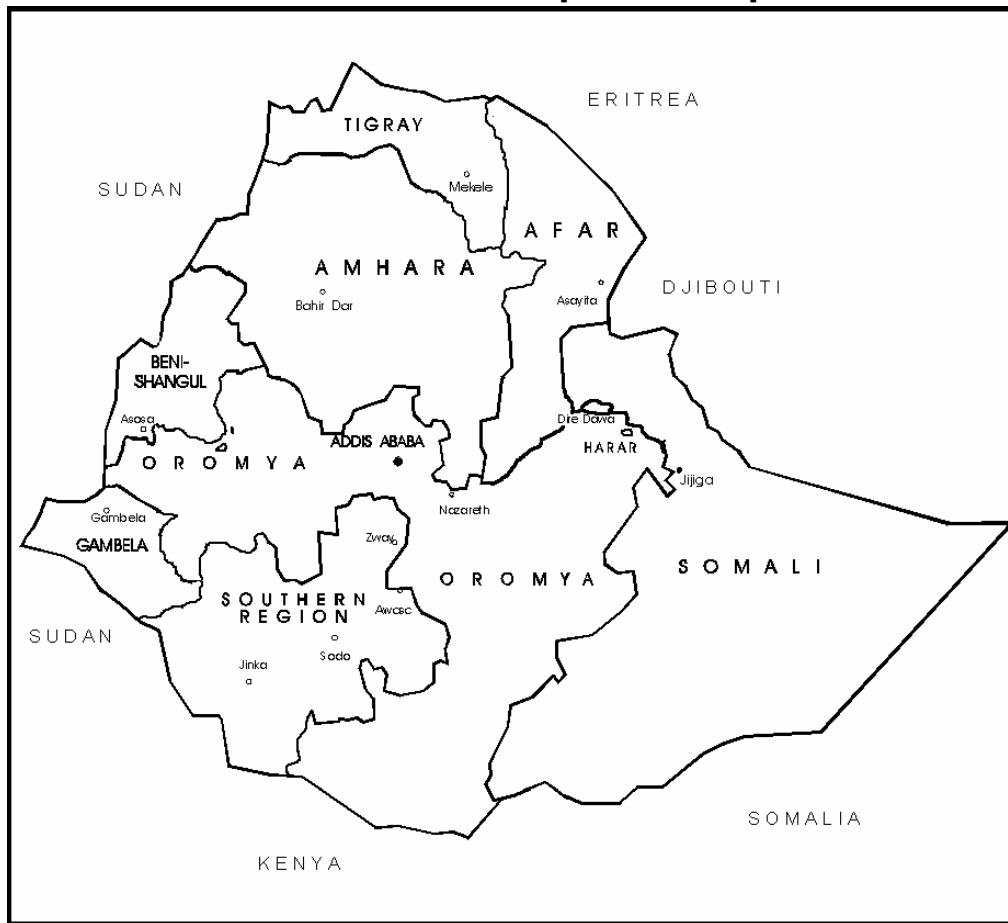
### **Health and Nutrition**

A joint UNHCR-ARRA nutrition survey was carried out from 19-20 September 1997 in the western refugee camps. Results from a preliminary analysis shows the global malnutrition rate to be 12.2% weight-for-length which is considered unsatisfactory.

### **Somali refugees in Southern Ethiopia**

As a result of clashes between rival factions in the Bay and Bakool regions of Southern Somalia some 8,000 refugees have sought refuge in Dolo Odo, Dolo Bay and Suftu. UNHCR's assistance to this caseload includes shelter material in the form of tents and a donation of drugs to the local health centre. WFP in conjunction with UNHCR is also running a nutrition intervention programme for malnourished children.

## Administrative Map of Ethiopia



### DISCLAIMER

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 delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

### SOURCES:

UNDP/EUE field reports; CARE; Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC); European Union; FAO; FEWS; National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA); Grain Market Research Project (MEDaC); SCF (UK); CRS; UNICEF; UNHCR; WHO; AFP; ENA.

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