

MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA -
MAY 1997

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

- After recent assessments, including pastoral areas, the DPPC has increased the number of beneficiaries and the required tonnage of relief food by more than 50% over the December 1996 appeal;
- Although *belg* rains continue, unfavourable harvests are predicted in some areas due to the late onset and low level of the rains;
- While reports on the severity of the situation in Wolayita differ, deliveries of food to the affected population have been stepped up in a coordinated effort between the Government and NGOs;
- “Migrants” in Dollo are reported to be in need of food and medical assistance. Preparations are underway to provide the necessary supplies;
- The repatriation of refugees from Sudan to Ethiopia resumed on 25 May;
- UNHCR and ARRA have released the official results of the re-registration exercise in the western refugee camps.

DPPC: Number of relief food beneficiaries had to be increased by more than 50%
The Early Warning Department of the Central Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee (DPPC) has issued an “Early Warning System Report” (May, 1997) revising the “Food Situation and Assistance Requirements in 1997”. This report updates “The Food Supply Prospect in 1997” issued in December 1996 and the subsequent releases of January and February 1997.

While the December appeal had projected for 1997 an estimated needy population of 1,932,000 requiring 199,846 MT relief food, the new figures indicate both in the cropping and pastoral areas 3,356,718 people in need requiring about 313,670 MT relief food - which is an increase of more than 50% over the December 1997 appeal.

Recent assessment missions in agricultural areas of Bale and Harari as well as in pastoralist areas of Somali Region, Bale and Borena of Oromyia, and South Omo of Southern Region led to this significant increment.

Unfavourable belg harvests predicted in some areas

During the first part of May, a considerable decrease in rainfall activity occurred throughout the country, particularly in the Northeast, east, and Southeast. This compounds the trend from April, in which rains were generally very irregular, below normal in amount and distribution, and thus generally unfavourable for good *belg* crop production. Many *belg* crops were not even planted due to the late onset of rains. In the *belg*-producing zones of Southern Tigray, North and South Wollo and North Shewa Zones, agriculture officials report that only one third of *belg* agriculture planned for this year was actually accomplished, and that the growth and development of early-planted crops has been hampered by prolonged moisture stress.

FEWS/EU-LFSU (Local Food Security Unit) has predicted unfavourable *belg* harvests in some areas due to the late onset and low level of the rains. According to the National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA), the sorghum crop in Tigray and East Shewa is likely to show signs of water stress, as with the wheat and barley crops in South Wollo, North Shewa, and parts of Arsi. In the south and west of the country, rainfall levels were much higher.

Satellite data show that during May most of the rainfall activity was limited to the western half of the country whereas eastern and southern parts received very small amounts of rainfall.

Response to food shortage in Wolayita stepped up

The food shortage in Wolayita continues to give cause for concern. DPPC has dispatched food for the second month to the 423,258 people estimated to be in need of assistance in Wolayita. Distributions have begun, and are being managed by the local DPPC.

Redd Barna has received a donation of 2,000 MT for distribution in Wolayita, and SCF-UK has secured 6,000 MT of grain and 200 MT of locally produced high energy biscuits in equivalent donations from the British government's Overseas Development Administration (see below) and the European Union. Distribution of this grain will be handled by the local DPPC.

The British Government's Overseas Development Administration has made a donation to Save the Children-UK of 3,000 MT of maize and 100 MT of high protein biscuits worth 6,436,000 Birr to be distributed through the zonal DPPC in Wolayita. In addition, Redd Barna has transported 2,000 MT of grain to Bolosso Sore.

In May InterAide France conducted a nutritional survey (weight for length) of 7,600 children in 15 kebelles of Kindo Koisha wereda (approximately 60% of the total population of children between six months and five years), and found that 12% of the sample was clinically undernourished. The breakdown of the findings is as follows:

In addition, 2.6% of the sample presented evidence of oedema, giving rise to suspected kwashiorkor. IAF has responded by providing logistical support to the wereda DPP Committee to deliver food to the worst affected PAs, and has also provided 15kg rations on a community-based distribution system to 3,000 targeted children in these communities. Monitoring is being conducted through targeted home

visits, and it is expected that distribution of the supplementary rations will continue until the first half of July, at which time it is expected that the first *belg* harvests may be ready.

The Soddo Coordination Office of the DPPC reported that 120,000 of the drought victims need free aid, and 280,000 are expected to receive assistance through participation in food for work and employment generation schemes. In April and May, 4,600 MT of wheat and 400 MT of supplementary food was distributed by the DPPC. The most significant impediment in the distribution effort was said to be a shortage of vehicles

In response to differing reports on the severity of the food shortage situation in Wolayita, a joint technical committee composed of DPPC, WFP, SCF/UK, and FEWS is performing a rapid vulnerability and needs assessment to better target and prioritise response for the most vulnerable populations. Furthermore, UNDP-EUE is continuing its monitoring activities in the area.

Food and medicine needed for Dollo “migrants”

Assistance to Somali and other migrants in the Dollo area continues to be coordinated through the Dollo Task Force, chaired by DPPC. Although one month’s food ration was provided by WFP in April, there is a need to continue to supply food to the migrant population. DPPC is awaiting availability of some of the 25,200 MT WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP), now fully approved at headquarters level, to provide to this population.

ICRC, which is active in providing health services to the displaced population in Dollo, has expressed its concern about the need to continue to provide supplementary drugs and food to the migrants there so as not to deplete local stocks meant for the resident population.

UNICEF has agreed with the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission and Ministry of Health to transfer available stocks of medicines and relief supplies for possible use in the Moyale and Dollo-Suftu areas. DPPC has agreed to provide a truck to transport the items, but there is still a shortage of fuel and money for driver per diems. Negotiations are underway with UNHCR to work out the details of the delivery process.

Assistance given to Bench Maji Zone

Emergency relief food is being delivered to drought affected pastoralists in Dizi and Surma weredas of Bench Maji Zone. The food, delivered in a helicopter airlift five times daily to Oro in Dizi Woreda, has reached an amount of 212 MT. At the end of May, flights to Surma were expected to begin. According to the Southern Region DPPB Head, the air deliveries were necessary given that the onset of the rainy season had made road access impossible.

Local purchase experiences delays

The World Food Programme reported that by the end of May, 9,000 MT of grain had been delivered so far this year. 56,268 MT has been contracted but not yet delivered, and approximately 5,000 MT has been tendered but not contracted.

EuronAid has reported that over 14,000 MT of grain has been delivered out of the total projected amount of 34,988 MT (40%). There have been some defaults in the delivery of sorghum in Addis Ababa and Kombolcha because of grain price increases and decreased availability.

Delays in the delivery of locally purchased food continue in many parts of the country. Traders have complained that the main reason for this is the fact that donors are no longer assisting with advance payments thus forcing suppliers to entirely pre-finance their operations. Discussions between donors and traders on this issue are still pending. Other reasons for the delays, however, have also been offered by EuronAid:

1. Prices have increased to such an extent that suppliers claim to have incurred financial loss.
2. There are too many operations running simultaneously, that are being undertaken by the same company, i.e. a company has contracts with EuronAid, WFP, and EU to a variety of destinations with the same completion date.
3. Suppliers claim that the quality specifications are too stringent. EFSRA has, however, shown greater flexibility in quality control.
4. There is concern that the stocks of cereals available for purchase are lower than was first envisaged.

Armyworm problem being tackled

The Agriculture Department of South Omo Zone said that pesticide is being sprayed to control an armyworm infestation that broke out on 460 hectares of land in Hamer Bena Woreda. Some of the peasant farmers, whose crops have been destroyed as a result of the infestation which occurred at the beginning of May, have started re-cultivating their land. Spraying equipment and pesticide has also been dispatched to Kuraz Woreda where infestation is feared likely to occur. Armyworm has also been reported in Borena Zone (Liben Woreda), six weredas of Bale Zone (Oromia), Harari, East Hararghe and parts of Somali Region (Jijiga, Degehabur, Fik and Shinile Zones). Measures to face the threat (spraying, setting of pheromone traps) have been increased.¹

REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

Note: This report is based on UNHCR information from April with updated camp population figures as of end of May.

Refugee/returnee statistics

¹ Sources: Ministry of Agriculture ("Armyworm Situation Report" 6/5 -1/6/1997) and *Ethiopian Herald*, 25/5/97 and 30/5/97

Sudanese refugees:

A joint statement from the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), UNHCR, and the World Food Programme was issued giving official figures for the camps in Gambella National Regional State. The figures are based on the re-registration exercise carried out in February/March 1997.

Bonga	11,614
Dimma	6,778
<u>Fugnido</u>	<u>12,275</u>
Total	30.667

New ration cards were issued to all these refugees. UNHCR, ARRA and WFP are now in the process of reviewing the new data and their implications for the structure and delivery of the refugee food programme in those camps. Measures are also underway to register those refugees who may have been genuinely left out of the re-registration exercise, and also to structure better the procedures for the screening of new arrivals. Once this follow-up is completed and the necessary adjustments have been made to the figures announced in the statement, an additional statement will be issued which will include a summary of the various other actions and measures which will have been taken concerning other aspects of the refugee programme in the west in light of the re-registration results.

In addition to the Gambella camps, 5,003 new arrivals from the Blue Nile region of Sudan have been transferred from the temporary site near the Kunche river to the new site at Shirkole in the Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State. The transfer was completed on 14 April. The total population in Shirkole settlement by 25 May was 7,831, which includes refugees from Kunche, as well as refugees entering Ethiopia at Kurmuk, and transferred directly to the site.

Somali refugees:

With the exception of a small change reported in Dharwanaji due to transfers, the reported populations of the nine camps in the Somali Region did not change during April and May. Of a total population of 283,084 the breakdown by camp is as follows: Aisha 15,282; Camaboker 36,120; Daror 49,388; Dharwanaji 42,995; Hartisheik 56,7681; Kebrebeyah 10,416; Rabasso 28,381; Teferiber 43,821.

2,034 refugees were repatriated from Hartisheik to the Hargeisa area of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland.

Other refugees:

Populations of Kenyan, Djiboutian Afar and Addis Ababa assisted refugees in Ethiopia remained relatively unchanged from February at 8,671; 8,000 and 756 persons respectively.

Altogether, the refugee population in Ethiopia stood at a total of 339,009 by the end of May 1997.

General refugee issues

Sudanese refugees:

The Government of Ethiopia informed UNHCR that it had decided that Sudanese asylum-seekers of Islamic/Arabic descent (referred to as Northern Sudanese) would no longer be allowed to lodge applications for refugee status in Addis Ababa, as it was intended that eligibility procedure for them would henceforth be carried out at the entry points along the border. Negotiations between UNHCR and ARRA were continuing at the end of May.

The nutritional situation at the Shirkole site is said to be improving. A MUAC screening of 1177 children was concluded in April which gave an under five global malnutrition rate of 15.6%. While still high, the rate continues to decline steadily. Therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes have begun at the new centre, providing two meals a day to children under 80% WFH. The nutritional situation in the other western camps continues to be stable.

On 19-20 April, a Regional Reproductive Health workshop was held in Gambella town. A total of 35 participants from ARRA, MOH, refugee representatives and other Gambella regional governmental/non-governmental organisations participated in the workshop. The main purpose of the event was to create awareness about reproductive health among the various agencies and refugee representatives in order to establish the framework for developing reproductive health services in the three refugee settlement sites. Each refugee settlement drew up an implementation plan for the rest of the year to address reproductive health activities.

Somali refugees:

Nutritional levels in four of the nine Somali refugee camps continue to have malnutrition rates above 10% <80% WFH as reported in March. Kebribeyah, Teferiber, Derwonaji and Daror all reported slight increases in their malnutrition rates. RLO sent its nutritionist during the month of May to make site visits, and has requested the extension of service of the SCF(UK) nutritionist seconded to ARRA until the newly hired ARRA nutritionist takes over.

There is an acute need for non-food items such as plastic sheeting and blankets, but these items, already requested from UNHCR Headquarters, are not currently available.

To operationalise the execution and implementation of the project for the improvement of Reproductive Health of Somali refugees in Eastern Ethiopia, a pre-project workshop was held in Addis Ababa from 28-30 April. The workshop was jointly organised by UNHCR-RLO, ARRA and UNFPA. Twenty-five participants from ARRA, SCF-UK, Region 5 Health Bureau, UNFPA/CST, UNFPA, and the National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia participated in the workshop. Institutional arrangements for the execution and implementation of the project including plan of action for the first year were reviewed and finalised. The project was scheduled to start in May.

REPATRIATION

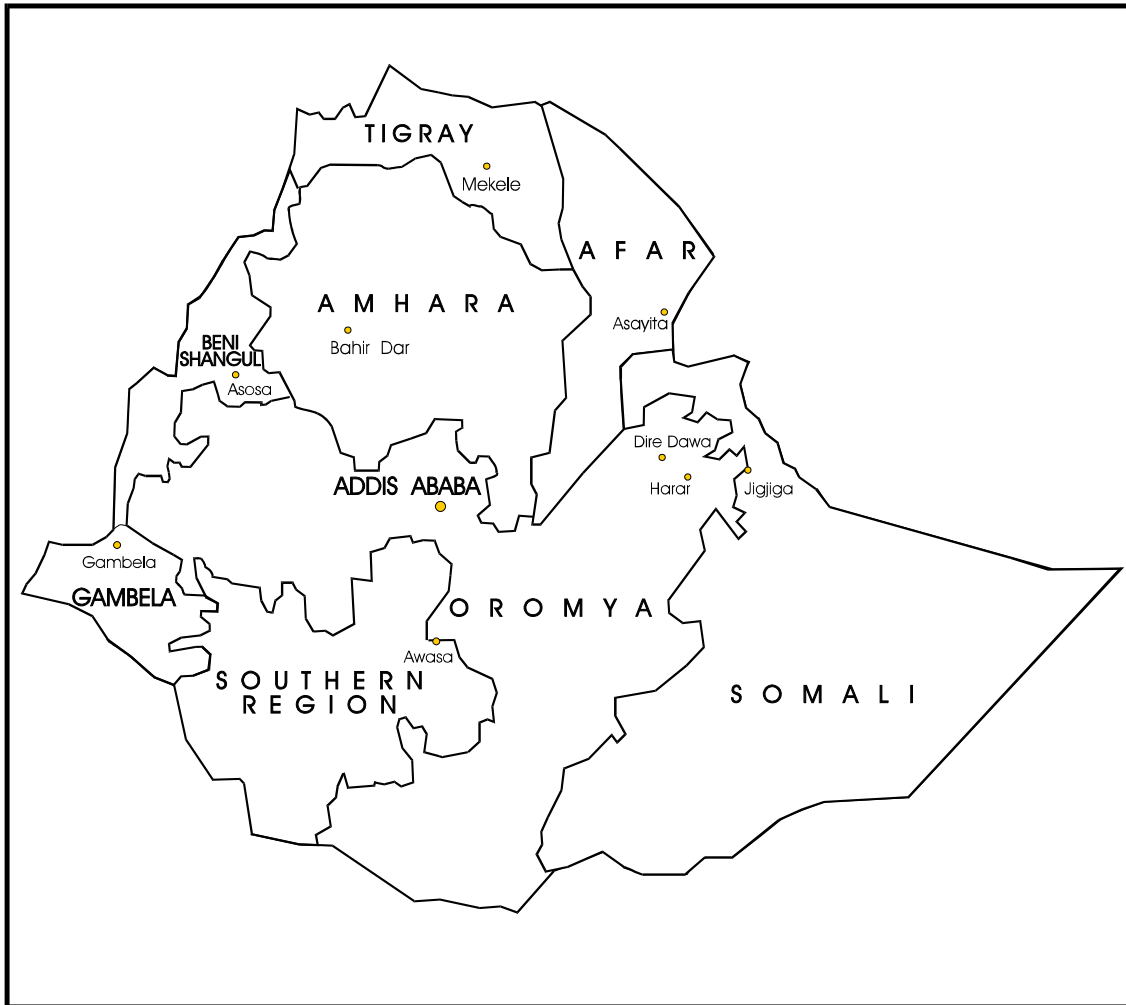
Repatriation to North-west Somalia

The repatriation of Somali refugees to North-west Somalia was temporarily suspended during April, pending a decision by ARRA to resume the movements as scheduled from Hartisheik camp. Despite the delays, 820 families composed of 4,811 individuals came forward at Hartisheik to register for repatriation.

Repatriation from Sudan

Repatriation of 20,000 refugees from Sudan was begun on 25 May. Returnees were brought to Endaselassie town and provided with household utensils and 1,000 Birr each. 8,000 returnees will be returned to Tigray, with the remaining 12,000 being transported to the Amhara and other regional states. All expenses will be covered by UNHCR, with the Relief Society of Tigray, Amhara Relief and Development Organisation, and Oromo Self-Help Organisation responsible for distribution.

Administrative Map of Ethiopia



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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); UNICEF; UNHCR; WFP Food Aid Information Unit; WHO.

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