

## MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA JUNE 1997

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*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

- In most areas the 1997 *belg* season is likely to be the worst of the last three years. Numbers of food aid beneficiaries are rising, as findings of various assessment missions indicate;
- The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission presented the Relief Operation Plan for 1997: The food gap stands currently at 154,653.02 MT;
- Local purchase is picking up with WFP reporting deliveries of 21,000 MT;
- Reported fertilizer sales as of end of June stand at 79,530 MT - little more than half the sales at the same time last year;
- A workshop on “Vulnerability in Ethiopia - From Disaster to Development” was organised by the DPPC, bringing together key partners in the field of vulnerability assessment;
- Armyworm infestations are widespread but reportedly under control;
- While the current relief needs in Wolayita are being covered, the area urgently needs a long-term development strategy in order to eliminate the root causes of vulnerability;
- The needs of vulnerable groups in Dolo Odo and surroundings (Somali Region) are currently adequately met;
- General events of importance during the reporting period include the Day of the African Child, the Africa Refugee Day and the presentation of the UNDP World Development Report 1997;

### ***Poor belg season in most parts of the country***

DPPC assessment missions to various regions, UNDP-EUE missions to parts of Amhara, Tigray and Oromyia Regions, and the Nutrition Surveillance Programme of SCF/UK (covering the start of the *belg* season in South Wollo, Oromyia and North Shewa of Amhara Region) indicate consistently similar findings: The 1997 *belg* season, comparable to the one in 1994, is likely to be the worst of the last three years. The Famine Early Warning System of USAID projects, even for a “best-case scenario”, this season’s output in North Shewa, North and South Wollo and South Tigray to be 29% lower compared to 1995 and over 40% lower compared to 1996.

Generally, the rains started late and were characterised by poor amount, uneven distribution and short duration. While this pattern will result in a late and reduced *belg* harvest, land preparation for the long cycle *meher* crops was also seriously hampered in many areas. Although it is too early in the year to make projections concerning the impact on main season production, some concerns were raised locally about a possible yield reduction as compared to last year. Some areas also reported poor livestock condition and low terms of trade. As the DPPC states in its “Relief Plan of Operation for 1997” (see below), a full assessment of the impact of the failure of this year’s *belg* rain is expected to be completed soon.

A significant increase in the number of relief food beneficiaries has been noted, particularly in the traditionally food insecure areas of Amhara and Tigray Regions, but also in vulnerable pocket areas of Oromyia and Southern Nations Regions. Field findings substantiate the urgency of appeals to the donor community.

Rainfall data provided by NMSA indicated in the first dekad of June a decrease in rainfall activity over north-eastern, central and lowlands of north-western and western Ethiopia while reverse patterns occurred over western parts of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State and the lowlands of other southern parts of the country. The second dekad showed an increase in rainfall activity over most parts of the country with the exception of southern and south-eastern parts. This trend was to continue during the third dekad. The weather pattern has its impact on agricultural production: As indicated by NMSA, improved rainfall will not contribute to the recovery of crops previously damaged due to shortage of *belg* rains. The current rainfall activity will reportedly persist for the month of July and some areas over northern and western Ethiopia are anticipated to get heavy rainfall. However, this condition will gradually weaken and as a result, below normal rainfall activity is expected over Arsi and Bale zones in Oromyia Region as well over some areas of western Oromyia, Amhara and Tigray Regions (particularly eastern parts). Overall, NMSA forecasts the possibility of poor *meher* rains, which will be generally deficient and irregular in 1997 due to the global weather system referred to as the “El Niño” episode.

On a broader perspective, the Drought Monitoring Center supported by UNDP in Nairobi (Bulletin No. 97/05) indicates that the southeast-southwest monsoon is likely to be weaker than normal during the May to August period, which might result in below normal rainfall over the northern sector and the western parts of East Africa. The south-eastern areas of Ethiopia will remain generally dry. The Drought Monitoring Center also forecasts for June to August poor crop prospects due to below normal and poorly distributed rainfall in the northern sector of East Africa.

Cereal wholesale and producer prices have increased significantly in the last three months, reports the Grain Market Research Project. On average prices in the fourth week of June were 33% higher compared to the second week of April. Possible reasons for rising prices include lately an increasing wheat flow from wheat producing areas to Mekele and Eritrea and earlier, due to unfavourable agricultural production conditions, a decline in the flow of cereals into the major markets of Addis Ababa, Shashamane, Hossana, Jimma, Nekempt and Dessie by about 10%.

***Unmet needs: DPPC presents the Relief Plan of Operation for 1997***

In late June, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) released the "Relief Plan of Operation for 1997". The document was prepared in consultation with the regions as well as NGOs concerned and reflects the regional, zonal and wereda level allocation of food resources currently available as well as indicating unmet needs. Unlike previous years, only a few NGOs had submitted their relief plans by the middle of the current year. Not yet reflected in the report are additional needs which may arise as a result of the failure of this year's *belg* harvest. The report highlights in Part I the overall food needs and gaps, presents in Part II a regional breakdown and provides in Part III a summary of Employment Generation Scheme (EGS) programmes.

While the December 1996 Appeal had indicated nation-wide a number of 1.9 million people requiring an estimated relief assistance of 199,846 MT of relief food, the Operation Plan for 1997 presents new figures, mainly due to the fact that it was only earlier this year that the needs of pastoral areas became evident. As presented in the Operation Plan, the estimate of relief beneficiaries stands now at 3,418,190 people needing 329,451 MT of food. Pending final assessments on the *belg* season's results, these numbers will increase again - taking into consideration the requirements of areas such as Wollo (North and South) and North Shewa in Amhara Region, North Omo in Southern Nations region, South Tigray and pocket areas in other regions.

While the food requirement, as stated above, stands at 329,451 MT the total available food amounts to 174,797 MT (97,925 MT channeled through DPPC and 76,872 MT through NGOs). While recent allocations (of about 40,000 MT USAID Title III food, a WFP allocation of 25,900 MT and other unconfirmed pledges) are not included in the currently available food amount, the shortfall (available stocks versus needs) comprises some 154,653 MT. Even including the USAID and WFP amounts in the pipeline, unmet needs would still stand at 88,753. MT. "And yet," as the DPPC comments in the Operation Plan, "in light of the now certain *belg* failure in many areas in the north, the food gap is expected to widen."

### ***Local purchase programmes picking up***

The *World Food Programme* reported that by the end of June a total of 21,000 MT of grain had been delivered so far this year. Though, due to delays, local purchase had a slow start earlier in the year, during the month of June (and to date in July) deliveries have been proceeding on schedule at a rate of approximately 3,000 MT a week. Arrangements have been made to further accelerate the purchasing process.

After contract cancellations comprising about 20,000 MT, a total of 48,000 MT has been contracted but not yet delivered. After contracts are to be signed on 18,000 MT of maize in the third week of July, the balance to be delivered by the end of September is expected to amount to 45,000 MT.

The *EC Local Food Security Unit* reported that out of the local purchase programme of 75,000 MT initiated in 1995/96, deliveries in the current year have amounted to 9,489 MT (which brings the total deliveries under that programme to 65,271 MT). A second and third tender have been opened in 1997 with a total balance due as follows: Wheat 2,499 MT, maize 4,730 MT and sorghum 2,500 MT (total 9,729 MT).

*EuronAid* deliveries reported to date amount to 22,685 MT out of a total local purchase programme for the year of just under 35,000 MT.

Total physical stocks of the national *Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSRA)* stand at 65,503 MT (as of 11 July).

### ***Low fertilizer sales reported***

Targeted sales of fertilizers for 1997 amounts to in excess of 300,000 MT. According to FAO, the current tonnage of fertilizers in the country reaches 321,000 MT, which comprises a carry-over stock of 161,000 MT from last year plus new procurement of 160,000 MT. Sales to the consumers (down to farmers level) are reported to stand only at 79,530 MT as of 30 June 1997, whereas by the same time last year 138,427 MT were sold. There are two possible reasons for this June's low figure: One is that distributors are delayed in reporting sales figures (which might in fact be higher as of end of June) to the National Fertilizer Industry Agency (NFIA). The second reason is based on the poor *belg* season this year: Significantly less areas were covered with maize and sorghum (the main long-cycle crops *meher* crops planted in the *belg* season but not harvested until November/December) which led to a reduced fertilizer demand. However, sales are expected to go up considerably during July and early August, which in most areas is the planting time for the *meher* main season crops.

The fertilizer requirements for 1998 are projected to amount to 350,000 MT. According to pledges confirmed so far, those requirements will be met.

### ***DPPC workshop on vulnerability in Ethiopia***

“Vulnerability in Ethiopia. From Disaster to Development” was the subject of a major workshop organised by the DPPC and held at the Ghion Hotel in Addis Ababa from 23 to 25 June. The workshop, opened by the DPPC Commissioner, Simon Mechale, was attended by up to 170 participants representing all regions, federal government ministries and authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, embassies, donors and research institutions.

The aims of the workshop were “to bring key partners together in the field of vulnerability assessment in Ethiopia to start a process of information sharing and to increase cooperation”. Specific targets included sharing ideas on how to develop formats for regional, zonal and wereda vulnerability profiles, the presentation of some basic policy recommendations in vulnerability reduction and to provide an input to the National Five Year Plan for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness. Presentations and discussions were held both in plenary and group sessions, the latter being dedicated notably to three core topics under the general rubric of vulnerability: root causes, research and disaster response.

The large number of papers distributed during the workshop have been summarised in a report presented by the DPPC on 30 June. The report also details the recommendations of the working groups which includes the process, content and use of vulnerability profiles, which should be based on national guidelines. In the context of vulnerability research, a number of priority areas were identified such as the evaluation of policies, analysis of root causes and institutional and human research capacity building. The disaster response recommendations

commented on a number of approaches designed to enhance and improve the current National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management in order to strengthen the disaster response system.

### ***Armyworm infestation widespread - but mainly under control***

Many of the important crop producing areas of the country have reported the occurrence of Armyworm. Recent field visits, however, to parts of Amhara Region (North Shewa, Wollo), South Tigray, Oromyia (Hararghe) do not reflect an alarming situation since the infestation was by and large brought under control through chemical and traditional methods. Similar developments are reported from other parts of the country (e.g. Somali and Southern Regions). Heavy rains in late June and anticipated for July in many central highland areas are also expected to result in a much reduced level of infestation.

### ***Relief and development needs in Wolayita***

Last year's reduced *meher* harvest, damage to sweet potato crops and a two month delay of this year's *belg* rains are the major reasons for an increased need for relief intervention in the Wolayita area of North Omo Zone (Southern Nations region). As stated in the last Monthly Situation Report for Ethiopia, the overall response to food shortages has been stepped up, involving both the DPPC and a number of NGOs. According an assessment conducted by the authorities in May some 454,050 or 36% of the population are in need of food assistance (13,621 MT cereals plus some 328 MT of supplementary food). While the needs were covered to 75% on average by mid-June, relief intervention should continue until the end of August. In a long term perspective, the root causes of vulnerability in this, Ethiopia's most densely populated area, should be urgently addressed. A June UNDP-EUE report focuses on this issue looking at employment generation and taking North Omo's potential for timber production as an example of a possible alternative source of income.

### ***Vulnerable Groups in Dolo Odo being well covered***

Earlier this year groups of destitute people, both migrant influx and locals, were found in Dolo Odo and Suftu (Dolo Woreda, Liben Zone) and Woldyia (Dolo Bay Wereda, Afder Zone) in Somali Region. Consequently, agencies such as DPPC, ARRA, UNHCR, WFP and ICRC started to implement a food and non-food relief aid intervention. By 19 June a team from UNHCR/ARRA, supported by a WFP field officer had established a field presence in Dolo Town in order to distribute a new food aid delivery of 256.5 MT to nearly 14,000 beneficiaries in Dolo, Suftu and Woldyia. Included in this is an allocation of 20.25 MT to a supplementary feeding center (run by ARRA and UNHCR) which provides, since 23 June, around 1,000 meals a day to malnourished children and other vulnerable individuals. The situation now seems to be under control.

### ***Reduced relief needs in Afar Region***

According to the DPPC Relief Operation Plan (June 1997), Afar Region has this year an estimated number of relief food beneficiaries of 50,000 requiring 5,040 MT. This is significantly less than the figures presented in the May 1997 update on requirements, which

quoted 263,600 people in need of 11,862 MT of relief food. According to various sources the dry season in many parts of Afar Region did not have the severe impact originally thought.

### ***General events***

*Day of the African Child:* During the “Day of the African Child” Ethiopia’s President, H.E. Dr. Negasso Gidada, launched the National Programme of Action (NPA) for Children and Women. The NPA was developed in response to the 1990 World Summit for Children and covers the period 1996 - 2000. Although the programme has been in effect since last year, the occasion of the Day of the African Child, commemorating the massacre of school children in Soweto, South Africa, on 16 June 1976, was taken to launch it officially. Sectoral components of the NPA include health, food and nutrition, water supply and sanitation and education, while cross-sectoral programmes include children in especially difficult circumstances, the advancement of women and combating environmental degradation and emergencies.

Following the Day of the African Child a workshop organised by the Government’s Child and Youth Organisation and UNICEF was held on 17 June. On the same day a joint UNICEF-OAU programme brought together African ambassadors, UN officials and children to discuss the ratification of the African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child, child labour and child soldiers. It is estimated that 5.5 million of Ethiopian children under the age of 15 are living in destitution.

*Africa Refugee Day:* Commemorating the “Africa Refugee Day”, an exhibition and bazaar featuring refugee-produced items, refugee artists and a photo exhibit was presented at the UN ECA Africa Hall. During the opening ceremony on 17 June, introductory statements were made by representatives from the Government, OAU and UNHCR.

*Human Development Report 1997:* The global “Human Development Report” compiled by UNDP was also launched in Ethiopia. The report, which is the eighth of its kind, reflects among other indicators basic human development in terms of poverty, life expectancy, literacy, access to health services and safe water, etc. Included is also a Profile of Human Poverty Index, where Ethiopia ranks at position 170 out of 175 countries listed. Last year Ethiopia ranked at 168 out of 174 countries.

### ***Refugees in Ethiopia***

*(Information is as of May unless otherwise stated. An update on camp statistics will be provided in our next monthly situation report)*

Site development at the new settlement of Shirkole made good progress during May, providing all refugees transferred the previous month from Kunche with settlement plots, as well as the new arrivals met at the site during the transfer. In the meantime, however, the new influx continued and, by the end of the month, the number of refugees at Shirkole had exceeded the carrying capacity of the site (as a settlement), estimated at 7,000. In the influx

of Sudanese into the Assosa area has continued in June at a somewhat increased rate of daily arrivals. Details will be provided in the next monthly report.

Following the previous inter-agency assessment missions to the Dolo and Moyale areas, and the meeting of the inter-agency Task Force, UNHCR sent two missions at the end of the month to ascertain the situation of the refugees reported to be among the migrants from Kenya and Somalia. An ARRA/UNHCR protection mission to Dolo established that there were indeed persons of concern to UNHCR in three locations, namely Dolo Odo, Dolo Bay and Suftu. The exact numbers and status of these persons have not yet been determined.

In Moyale, most of the migrants had returned to their countries of origin, except for some 600 families who claim to have crossed the border as a result of ethnic fighting. These will be registered together with the old caseload, on the basis of which, assistance will be provided.

All eastern camps were affected by late deliveries of food. For the caseload in Shirkole, WFP has serious difficulties in delivering sufficient amounts of food in time. WFP cites resourcing and pipeline problems for the delays and shortfalls which will seriously affect the situation of some refugee caseloads if they are not addressed immediately. In several camps, the tight food situation led to demonstrations by refugees during the month.

Regarding repatriation, the anticipated resumption of convoys from Sudan began in late May with around 6,000 Ethiopian refugees returning home through the border town of Humera. The returnees were given cooking utensils, blankets, plastic shelters and 9 months worth of food rations during their stay at temporary transit shelters in Gondar and Endasilassie towns, together with Ethiopian Birr 1,000 (about \$150) each upon arrival in their home areas. The reintegration programme is being implemented with the assistance of the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), the Amhara Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (ARDO) and the Oromo Relief Organisation (ORO).

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