

HIGHLIGHTS

Rift Valley Fever

Human cases of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) have hit the Arabian Peninsula. Impact of the livestock import ban would have far reaching implications on Somali Region.

DFID Report and Pastoral Workshop Highlights

A half-day workshop was held to present the implications of a DFID report highlighting the long-term crisis facing pastoral areas of Ethiopia.

Findings of WHO Assessment to Jijiga, Denan and Shinille

Findings indicate that the intervention strategy is food-driven, yet there is high malnutrition, and poor sanitation creating a ripe environment for spread of disease.

Focus on East and West Hararghe

Heavily deforested and troubled by erratic rainfall, East and West Hararghe are plagued by constant food insecurity.

Weather Report

(Courtesy of Fews)

Widespread seasonable rains were observed in the middle of September and early October in the southern and southeastern pastoral areas of the country.



17 October 2000

NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Operational Review in Somali Region

A Joint Government/UN/NGO/Donor Operational Review in the Somali Region started on 8 October. The general objective of the review is to assess relief operations and relief requirements in response to the drought in Somali Region. The mission will also identify urgent administrative, logistics and support requirements to address the drought situation during October to December and recommend an operational contingency plan in case the September-October Deyr rains fail. The assessment has three teams and will last about 12 days.

Possible World Bank Loans to Ethiopia for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

Two World Bank missions are currently in Ethiopia for appraisals of possible World Bank loans to initiate a post-conflict rehabilitation program. The Government of Ethiopia had asked the World Bank to participate in such a program to reconstruct and rehabilitate social infrastructure (schools, water schemes, health institutions) and private housing in the war affected areas. The loans would also be used to help the mostly rural population to restart farm production. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of war damaged roads and bridges are also under consideration. At the same time the Ethiopian Government and the World Bank are negotiating the conditions for a program to demobilise a part of the army. The mission gathered information on a visit to war affected areas in the border *weredas* of Tigray Region and in briefings by the local and regional authorities. The proposals will be submitted to the World Bank decision-making authorities at the end of November and should take effect early next year. The total proposed program is estimated at around \$ 400 million with the reconstruction and rehabilitation component currently estimated at between \$ 100 and \$150 million.

UN Observers Deployed

The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) has marked the launch of the mission's second phase of operations. Accordingly, the 100 UNMEE observers are going to be in place next week on both sides of the Ethiopian and Eritrean border. The three-phase plan of operations will involve the deployment of 4,200 UN peacekeeping troops, who will be in addition to 220 military observers, as well as a civilian component. The third phase is going to be launched after the approval of the Security Council.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has (on September 29) nominated, Botswana's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila as his special representative to lead the UNMEE. However, until Mr. Legwaila assumes his functions, Mr. Yogesh Saxena, Officer-In-Charge of UNMEE, is going to lead the newest peacekeeping operation.

EU Commissioner Expresses Desire to Support War Displaced

The EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Mr. Poul Nielson arrived in Ethiopia on 4 October as part of a working visit to east African countries. The Commissioner during his two-day visit met with government officials including Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. During his talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. Nielson expressed the EU's plan to reinvigorate relations with Ethiopia, and his desire to support Ethiopia's efforts to rehabilitate the war displaced. He also confirmed that the EU is ready to provide Ethiopia with financial and technical assistance, particularly in the fields of education, health, infrastructure development and capacity building apart from the ongoing food assistance.

UN Mine Action Program to be Launched

A Mine Action Centre to supervise emergency mine-action operations has been set up within the structure of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) pursuant to the Security Council Resolution authorising the mission. According to various sources the significant number of land mines and unexploded ordnances (UXO) in the contested areas in the Ethiopia and Eritrea are of a great concern now, as civilians who fled their homes during the war are likely to start returning following the deployment of peacekeepers, withdraw of troops and cessation of hostilities. Accordingly, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) has been set up to ensure the safe deployment of the UNMEE in Ethiopia and Eritrea and to facilitate the safe return of local populations displaced by the two-year war.

HALO Trust, a UK/US registered charity organization is conducting a survey in Ethiopia and Eritrea to ascertain the nature and the extent of the landmine/UXO threat in the future temporary security zone (TSZ) and adjacent areas.

Mary Robinson Confirms

Human Rights Component in Peacekeeping Mission

Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, visited Ethiopia to participate at the opening session of the Regional Seminar of Experts on Prevention of Ethnic and Racial Conflicts in Africa held in Addis Ababa from 4-6 October 2000. While in Ethiopia she consulted with Ethiopian authorities, the UN Country Team and representatives of the OAU and ECA as well as key representatives of the civil society. During her visit Mary Robinson, in parallel to the Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea, confirmed that there would be a small component within UNMEE to follow human rights issues. A Senior Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be appointed to act as the focal point for the human rights "team" and three additional professionals trained on international law will be hired for human rights monitoring.

Prime Minister Re-elected

Meles Zenawi, who has been Ethiopia's Prime Minister since 1995, was re-elected by a unanimous vote of the House of People's Representatives on October 10. The re-elected Prime Minister requested the House's approval for the continuation of the previous cabinet until structured changes based on a study are met. After discussions, the House accepted the Prime Minister's request. The House of People's Representatives also re-elected Speaker of the House Dawit Yohanes and Deputy Speaker Dr. Petros Olango on October 9.

Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (ORHC)/WHO

Assessment mission to drought affected areas in southern Somalia.

By the end of 1999, approximately 400,000 people in the Bay, Bakol, and Gedo regions, located in the north west of southern Somalia, were considered in need of relief food assistance. In January, a famine alert was issued for Bakol, which borders the Somali region in Ethiopia. Nutrition surveys confirmed high levels of malnutrition, usually exceeding 20%. Mainly due to security constraints, food aid deliveries were on average less than 40% of the estimated needs. As a result, when food distribution in the Somali region of Ethiopia gained momentum, people from Bakol reportedly went to Ethiopia, in particular to Kelafo in Gode Zone for food assistance, while pastoralists from Gedo increasingly moved to Liben. This ties with reports from monitors in Somalia, reporting that food from Ethiopia, also oil distributed by ICRC and NGOs was sold on markets in these parts of Somalia. At the same time, DPPC/WFP reports also showed monthly increasing

UN Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement to visit Ethiopia

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) agreed earlier this year that there should be increased efforts by agencies and governments to bring about improvements in the delivery of assistance and protection to internally displaced populations (IDPs). To this end, the IASC agreed that a Senior Inter-Agency Network would be established, comprising senior focal points in all concerned organizations to carry out reviews of selected countries with IDPs and to make proposals for an improved inter-agency response to their needs. Mr. Dennis McNamara was appointed as UN Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement within OCHA to head the inter-agency review process. He is planning to visit Ethiopia on 18 October to assess with the UN Country Team current efforts to provide protection and assistance to IDPs and identify insufficient areas of response and what might be done to improve the situation. Additionally, Mr. McNamara will look at longer-term recommendations and proposals for revised inter-agency approaches to strengthen future response. The IASC was established after the creation of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) in 1991 and now acts as a reference group on policy and humanitarian issues for the Emergency Relief Coordinator who is also the head of the Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

beneficiary figures in Kelafo and other parts of the southern zones in the Somali region.

Following the Gu rains, the situation showed some improvement, however. By September food from Ethiopia was no longer seen on markets. In view of persisting high case-loads of beneficiaries, the mission recommends that DPPC/WFP re-assess the situation in Kelafo and other parts of Ethiopia bordering Somalia and intensify distribution monitoring.

95% of Children Under Five Immunized

During the recent UNICEF supported measles/vitamin A campaign in Gode Zone in August over 95% of children under five were immunized.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

WHO Supports Malaria Prevention Programme

In anticipation of the coming malaria transmission season beginning after the rains, the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Bureaus have been engaged in various malaria prevention and preparedness activities. WHO has provided drugs and medical supplies through their regular budget of US\$ 100,000 distributed to all malaria-affected regions in Ethiopia. Additionally, these regions have conducted "Malaria Control Week " activities since the end of August during which intensive health education and environmental control activities were undertaken. The Ministry of Health is also currently distributing insecticides to affected regions to be used in case of epidemics.

Following the national Roll Back Malaria (RBM) conference and the development of national and regional plans of action, WHO through its RBM activities has allocated US\$ 400,000 for control of the vector and parasite including reducing the risk of bites and community based environment activities. The funds have already been transferred to selected regions as per their plan of action and will also be utilized for the training of health workers and for strengthening partnerships for malaria control at the regional level.

As part of the RBM capacity building strategy, WHO is currently conducting an international training for 16 African countries in Nazareth, Ethiopia. Following the successful completion of a similar course last year, the course will again be conducted in Ethiopia. Six trainees from Ethiopia will participate in this two-month course.

Mine Risk Education Agreement for War Affected IDPs

A one-year joint programme for landmine awareness education in Tigray region was signed on 19 September 2000 between UNICEF and the Rehabilitation and Development Organization (RaDO), a national NGO. The agreement, which builds on a pilot initiative started in October 1999, is set within the wider context of the UN mine action programme, and an integral part of the OAU/UN peace monitoring and peacekeeping process. Tigray regional, zonal, and affected *wereda* government counterparts are also partners in the project. The project will be located in the settlements of war displaced persons in Western, Central and Eastern zones of Tigray region.

The objective of the project is to provide technical guidance and mine risk education to communities at risk, in order to change behavior to prevent death and injury resulting from landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) incidents. According to the agreement, both parties are committed to building knowledge,

USDA Official Visits Ethiopia

Patricia Garamendi, Deputy Administrator for International Cooperation and Development of the Foreign Agriculture Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), visited Ethiopia from 8-11 October to follow up on Secretary Glickman's School Feeding Initiative, and to explore other food security issues in the relief and development context. During her stay in Ethiopia, Ms. Garamendi met with a number of government and UN officials, including the Commissioner of Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, met with a number of NGOs active in food security programs, and traveled to Negelle in South Ethiopia.

understanding and awareness on the dangers of landmines and UXO among the civilian population, recognizing the special vulnerability of children.

In support of the agreement, UNICEF will provide technical guidance and advice, financial assistance, in kind-transport and administrative support, totaling US\$ 462,200 for a period of 12 months. UNICEF is the lead agency in the UN system for landmine awareness. In return, RaDO is expected to implement, monitor and report on the project in co-operation with regional and local counterparts in Tigray.

Training in EPI Peripheral Level

The Somali Regional Health Bureau in collaboration with UNICEF Gode has conducted a training of 18 health workers, junior nurses and health assistants in Extended Programme of Immunization (EPI) peripheral level and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) integration during the first week of September. The objective was to train health workers in support of the establishment of routine EPI services in 14 health institutions of Gode and Korahe zones. Past reasons for the failure of routine EPI have included low coverage (less than 10%), lack of vaccines and cold chain systems, and lack of technical capacity and reporting.

Three recommendations resulted from the training:

1. continuous supervision of trained participants;
2. support of EPI equipment and materials is paramount; the participants cannot function without the necessary EPI equipment;
3. follow-up training to update and refresh participants at least every three months at zonal level.

Funding for Tigray Returnee/IDP Population in Gulomakeda

UNICEF has been informed by the US State Department Office for Population, Migration and Refugees (PRM) that its health, water and shelter proposal for returning IDPs in the *wereda* of Gulomakeda in Eastern Tigray region has been approved for funding for the amount of US\$ 670,000. This includes a component for WHO health facility rehabilitation.

UNICEF and WHO will make a joint review planning mission in Tigray next week to identify activities for health rehabilitation in accordance with the appeal requirements. This will include a water component and supply of basic shelter materials to Ethiopians returnees from Eritrea. A special planning exercise will be held in mid October with *wereda*, zonal, and regional counterparts, intended to ensure the most efficient and timely implementation.

WEATHER REPORT

Extract from the October Ethiopia Food Security Update, Courtesy of FEWS

September is the beginning of the end of the main growing season in Ethiopia. The Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) starts to gradually retreat from the northeast to southwest, until it moves beyond Ethiopia's borders in late November. In October and November, the ITCZ is normally positioned over the southern lowlands of the country where it produces rains, known as *hagaya* in Borena. These rains are extremely important to the replenishment of pasture and water in the pastoral areas of South Omo Zone, SNNPR, Borena Zone, Oromiya Region, and most of the southern Somali Region.

This year the withdrawal of rainfall from the north has delayed by over one month. This has been extremely beneficial, as the season started late in the

WHO Inter-Regional Workshop

From 26 - 29 September, the World Health Organisation (WHO) organised an inter-regional workshop in Nairobi. The workshop was attended by all the focal points for emergencies from the countries in the Horn of Africa, West Africa and the Great Lakes plus members of the Regional Offices for Africa and Mediterranean and WHO headquarters. The main purpose of the workshop was to take stock of the emergency situations in these countries, to establish common procedures and approaches in developing health-related appeals within the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP). This included how best WHO staff in the field could be in position to prepare appeals of high quality and that are comprehensive and at the same time concise. The issue of under-funding of the health sectors within the CAP process was also discussed. Both the focal point for Emergency Humanitarian Action (EHA) in Ethiopia and the WHO Special Public Health Adviser for OCHA participated in the workshop.

north and east of the country delaying planting. The crops required rainfall through September to reach maturity and complete grain filling process. If rains continue to prevail beyond the 10th October, however, crop yields could drop, as fragile cereal grains, especially Teff, will be destroyed.

In the southern and southeastern pastoral areas of the country, widespread seasonable rains were observed in the middle of September and early October. These rains are expected to continue in these parts of the country until at least the middle to late October.

If the current rains are adequate in the crop dependent areas of South Omo Zone, and the special weredas of Konso, Derashe and Burji, people will plant short cycle crops, such as teff, sweet potato and beans, the harvest of which would improve food security situation there in 2001. The performance of the current rainfall in both the pastoral and crop dependent areas of the southern half of the country is being closely monitored.

RELIEF FOOD, PLEDGES AND LOGISTICS

Supplementary food

To date, a total of seven tripartite agreements between WFP, DPPC and NGOs for supplementary feeding have been signed. The total volume of CSB being channelled through NGOs is 2,048 mt. The NGOs involved are Oxfam GB, MSF-Belgium, SIM (Society of International Missionaries), Concern, World Vision, Action Contre la Faim and Save the Children US.

Logistics

WFP resumed discharging in Djibouti Port on 20 September after a two-week break in incoming shipments. 1,100 trucks are currently operating under FATS (Food Aid Transport System). This increase is necessary in order to handle the expected high volume of incoming shipments for WFP and other donors.

The ECHO donated plane, provided by ECHO in support of relief operations in the Somali Region, arrived in Addis Ababa on 18 September, and was operational from 20 September. A combined flight schedule for both the ECHO aircraft and the Abyssinian flight services caravan, contracted by WFP, has been prepared.

A helicopter has been contracted for an additional 50 hours for use in Somali region, in addition to the 125 hours already completed. The helicopter has been used extensively in Somali Region, with a focus on Fik, Degehabur, Warder, Gode and Afder zones. The helicopter is considered important not only to be reaching otherwise inaccessible areas for assessments, but also in the event of medical evacuation of field staff.

The 140 short haul trucks operating under contract to WFP to help facilitate food deliveries in several regions of Ethiopia are now operational in Gode, Dire Dawa, Ginir and Arba Minch. As of 2 October, 525.5 MT has been dispatched out of Gode, 1081.9 MT out of Dire Dawa and 137.4 MT out of Ginir.

Refugees

On 14-17 September, WFP distributed food rations consisting of wheat, oil, peas and salt to 3,003 refugees located near Waelanhbi village in northern Ethiopia. The refugees consist of 2,904 Kunamas from Eritrea and 99 Nigerians who were in Eritrea and fled during the border conflict to Ethiopia.

An additional 3,500 refugees are expected in the area. On 19 September UNHCR, Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) and WFP conducted assessments of potential campsites. A final decision should be taken in the coming month.

On 25 September, the acting Head of the Somali Region, Omer Jibril opened a participatory training seminar on Food For Work initiatives focusing on reforestation, soil and water conservation. The seminar was sponsored by WFP with the support of UNHCR, ARRA and the Bureau of Agriculture (BoA). Over 30 people are participating from BoA/SNRS, UNHCR, ARRA, WFP and NGOs with offices in Jijiga. Following the two-week seminar, specific Food For Work projects will begin in the region implemented and sponsored by WFP, BoA/SNRS, UNHCR and ARRA.

Pledges

The European Union/ECHO has announced an in-kind contribution of 67,000 MT of wheat and 500 MT of oil through WFP amounting to an estimated US\$ 27.7 million to assist the drought-affected in Ethiopia.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Rift Valley Fever (RVF)

RVF Cases in Saudi Arabia and Yemen

An outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) in humans in Saudi Arabia and an outbreak of acute haemorrhagic fever syndrome in Yemen, which is suspected to be RVF have hit the Arabian Peninsula. The first cases of suspected viral haemorrhagic fever were reported in the area on 10 and 11 Sep 2000. Laboratory analysis at the United States' Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, confirmed a diagnosis of RVF in samples from Saudi Arabia. To date, 134 human cases of an acute haemorrhagic fever syndrome, including 31 deaths, have been reported in Yemen, while in Saudi Arabia there have been 160 suspected cases of RVF, including 33 human deaths. (Source: ProMed Mail, the global electronic reporting system for outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases and toxins.)

RVF Transmission

Rift Valley Fever is a viral zoonosis that may cause severe disease in both animals and humans leading to high morbidity and mortality. In human beings it causes an influenza-like syndrome with fever (37.8-40°C), headache, muscular pain, weakness, nausea, epigastric discomfort and photophobia. Recovery usually occurs within 4-7 days. While most cases are relatively mild, a small proportion of patients develop complications like eye disease (retinopathy), meningo-encephalitis or haemorrhagic fever syndrome with jaundice, bloody stools, bleeding from other orifices and death. Transmission to humans is either through infected mosquito bites or through contact with body fluids of infected animals, but is also possible through ingestion of raw milk or inhalation of aerosol. For further information access the WHO fact sheet at:

<http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact207.html> . Mosquitoes are biological vectors, in which the virus intensively multiplies. There is a transmission of the virus from infected female mosquitoes to their offspring via eggs. These eggs may survive many years in dry conditions and hatch during the rainy season. Mosquitoes are therefore reservoir hosts.

RVF affects many species of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, dromedaries), several rodents and wild ruminants (buffaloes, antelopes, wildebeest, etc.). The predominant symptoms are a high mortality among young stock and very high abortions rates among adult stock. Although most reports only mention the human cases, abortions in ruminants and deaths in calves and lambs are reported from Alhodaiah governorate. The Saudi Minister of Agriculture and Water reported that over 10 thousand sheep, cattle and camels have died and over 15 thousand sheep aborted in Saudi Arabia.

RVF- New Introduction or Present for Years?

RVF has so far been recognised exclusively in African countries and was associated with high rainfall and dense populations of vector mosquitoes. The outbreaks in Saudi and Yemen are the first cases of Rift Valley Fever reported outside traditionally affected areas in Africa. As weather conditions in the Horn of Africa have in most places not been very favourable for vector multiplication, it is important to establish whether this is a new introduction of the virus or whether, in fact, the pathogen has been present for some time (1997-98 there was a major outbreak in Kenya and Somalia). Ecological studies are being carried out to determine the factors that may have triggered the outbreak.

Impact of the Livestock Ban on Somali Region

The present Saudi Government decision in banning the import of livestock from the Horn of Africa is the second such measure in two years. The first restriction, which went into force in 1998, only after studies by WHO and FAO satisfied the Saudi authorities that the risk of importing the disease through the livestock trade was minimal. The current ban is said to be applicable to countries such as Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland and Somalia proper.

Although the renewed import ban imposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on livestock from the Horn of Africa does not affect the long-standing livestock trade with other Gulf States, the Saudi restriction will have far-reaching implications on the economic situation of the Ethiopian Somali National Regional State. More than two-thirds of household incomes are based on livestock production and trade. Somali "blackhead" sheep are in high demand by consumers in both Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Somali Region livestock shipped through the ports of Berbera and Bossaso in Somaliland in 1997, is estimated by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) to have been nearly three million head, valued at US\$120 million, exported from Berbera alone.

During the ban in 1998, livestock prices dropped by about 30%, and consumer products increased by about 25%. Some of the immediate effects for the current ban include: increase in livestock population on limited resources/facilities such as watering points and grazing land, decrease in the purchasing power of livestock owners, decline in prices of commodities in the local markets with negative consequences on domestic trade, unavailability of veterinary drugs & supply in local markets leading to deteriorating situation in livestock health with a resultant effect of reduced food security in the region. Following successive season of drought, pastoralists are much less resilient to the economic impact of the export ban than they were in 1998.

Livestock Ban in the Horn

Both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have imposed a ban on the importation of live animals from the countries in the Horn of Africa. This ban excludes the importation of meat (the virus is quickly killed by the drop in pH of the meat after slaughter). This ban is likely to remain in place for quite some time

and therefore affect the live animal export trade for an unknown period of time. The countries of the Horn of Africa will have to make a clear statement based on investigations and clear scientific data of their epidemiological situation after the events of 1997/98. Certainly the countries of the Arabian Peninsula will demand that the export of live animals be formalised and sanitised. The first step towards achieving this will be the establishment of sound animal disease surveillance and reporting systems in the countries of the Horn.

DFID Report and Pastoral Workshop Highlights

A half-day workshop was held on 5 October 2000 in Addis Ababa to present the implications of a UK Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned independent report on "Emergency Response Interventions in Pastoral Areas of Ethiopia" prepared by Stephen Sandford and Yohannes Habtu. This workshop was coordinated by both DFID and the UN Office for Regional Humanitarian Coordination (UNORHC) and was designed to be a forum for further discussions on the principle findings of the report.

The DFID report highlights the long-term crisis facing pastoral areas of Ethiopia and points to an apparent institutional vacuum that exists with regard to responsibility for response. It also cautions against calls for "rehabilitation" since the total restoration of pastoral livelihoods may no longer be a viable option. Nevertheless, emphasis is placed on the extent to which indigenous systems of production in pastoral areas can offer relatively high returns in rangeland areas and therefore deserve respect and support through external interventions. At the same time, in the face of increasing population pressure, livelihood diversification remains an ongoing challenge.

During the workshop, the majority of participants agreed that there is a need for the establishment of sound systems for data collection, analysis and reporting. The need for better early warning information was also recognized, however, it should not only be generated for donors or governments alone but also for pastoralists themselves.

According to the report, the drought was not the fundamental cause of the emergency this year but rather the low-level of response and lack of preparedness were key factors. To assist in future preparedness, participants of the workshop suggested that it is necessary to establish a multi-agency pastoral working group to look at early warning and response issues (including targeting and delivery of relief assistance) specific to pastoral areas.

The Ethiopian government lacks the resources to cope with emergencies on the present scale. While the role of the international media may have been significant in the mobilisation of humanitarian relief from donors this year, greater media advocacy to secure further commitment to tackling the longer-term issues facing the region is now required. New institutional initiatives are also essential to overcome current constraints due to technical divisions and partial mandates. Thus there is a need to rely on donors to carry this further given that funding commitments remain an essential pre-condition.

Findings of WHO Assessment to Jigjiga, Denan and Shinille

Dr Mohamed W. Dualeh, the WHO Special Public health Adviser to OCHA, traveled to Jigjiga, Denan and Shinille in September 2000. The assessment mission was carried out in order to assess the health situation of the drought-affected populations, the existing co-ordination mechanisms and the capacity of the local health authorities. Findings of his mission are highlighted below.

The current humanitarian intervention strategy is primarily food-driven, and constitutes mainly of general food distribution and selective feeding programmes. There is a need for greater input in the overall health care services, and in other vital sectors. Although the response of the international community has been very effective in accessible areas, the need now is to develop sustainable programmes while diminishing human and material resources from outside sources.

Densely populated villages and towns with poor sanitation, inadequate clean water supplies, and low-quality housing will contribute to the rapid spread of diseases in these locations. In addition, the interaction between malnutrition and infection in these populations, particularly among young children, will also contribute to the high rates of morbidity and mortality from communicable diseases. There is a lack of community-based structures, which could enable the early detection of communicable diseases and epidemics.

The disproportionate representation of international and local relief organizations in certain locations (e.g., Gode) may have resulted in the apparent en masse migration of displaced populations into these towns and villages. Also, the response of the international agencies (UN and NGOs) to the impact of the displaced populations is varied and characterized by different approaches and capabilities. Standardization of procedures and sound policies for health interventions is essential and should be streamlined.

The overall co-ordination among the UN agencies and NGOs operating in Gode Zone is very good with structured fora for communications, information sharing, standard settings and the development of shared objectives. However, the local government disaster management committee could be strengthened. It is crucial that outside resources, including those from the central health authorities, complement and support the local initiatives and realities and are not devised as parallel systems to substitute the local response.

The emergency situation is not yet over and a full recovery of the population from the drought consequences will take time. This implies that a concerted effort is needed to broaden the response from just food aid to other vital sectors. This should include the provision of appropriate training of the local authorities and enhancing institutional capacities for setting up sustainable systems.

FOCUS: EAST AND WEST HARARGHE

Hararghe is situated in the eastern part of Ethiopia in Oromiya Region, bordering Somali Region and is composed of East and West Hararghe Zones.

With an estimated population of some 1.8 million, East Hararghe is characterized by deforestation caused by population pressure over many decades and chronic food insecurity especially in the lowlands in some of the mid and highland *weredas*. East Hararghe consists of both lowland plains and mountainous



highlands and experiences a variety of climatic conditions. Plagued by three years of poor rains, armyworm and striga weed infestation, Quelea bird attack, and lack of seed due to repeated planting, weakened oxen and shortage of labor due to migration, the population and overall crop production has been severely affected in some of the *weredas*.

West Hararghe has an estimated population of 1.3 million of which the overwhelming majority are living in rural areas with over 90% percent living in the mid and highlands of the zone. The overall population density is estimated to be 62 persons per square km. The zone is known for its rugged mountains and plains in the lowlands. Due to poor management and a high population, like East Hararghe, West Hararghe is heavily deforested. It has been troubled by erratic rainfall and constant food insecurity problems.

While at lower altitudes crop cultivation in both East and West Hararghe is usually rather limited leading to a more livestock based economy, at higher altitudes the economy is characterized by both food and cash crops. The main crops in these zones are sorghum, maize, haricot bean, barley, wheat, Irish potato, sweet potatoes- cultivated during difficult years to improve food security, chat and coffee.

The Hararghe area has two rainy seasons, the small *belg* and the main *krempt*. *Belg* production is limited within the highlands and part of the midlands. *Belg* rains are used for the land preparation for long-cycle *meher* crop production. Rainfall variability and its frequently uneven distribution results in a wide range of climatic hazards farmers have to deal with.

The *belg* rains this year were late by one and half months in East and West Hararghe with showers occurring in April instead of February and March. Farmers were forced to dry plant maize and sorghum repeatedly. After a dry spell in June, the rain restarted at the end of July, but unfortunately were scarce and inconsistent. The rains continue until the end of October, some harvest will be expected from sorghum, however long cycle crops of maize have already largely failed.

A good part of East and West Hararghe Zone produce and market cash crops such as chat, a popular mild narcotic, having a trading potential that still exceeds actual production capacity. This is the most important chat producing area in the Horn of Africa. Besides chat, coffee, Irish potatoes and onions are produced for cash. These crops are mainly cultivated in the midlands and highlands and for chat also in the lowlands. While most of the actual farming systems are characterized by a strong subsistence component, the trend is towards more cash crop production.

The vast majority of the rural population obtain a living from agriculture, with some pastoralists and agropastoralists in the lowlands. Currently, livestock prospects look good, with enough feed and water for animals. No serious health problems are being reported, although there is still a fear of a malaria outbreak in the lowlands as this area is normally malaria prone.

There is a perennial problem in obtaining accurate beneficiary numbers, with several sources quoting different numbers. This constraint makes it hard to effectively target food assistance in the area. Future assessments to these zones should aim at providing more precise beneficiary numbers to ensure that resources are being used appropriately.

CARE Ethiopia to Distribute Relief Food in East and West Hararghe

Focusing on five programmatic areas, rural and urban infrastructure, water and sanitation, small-scale irrigation, reproductive health including HIV/AIDS and micro-credit, CARE is currently working in five regions in Ethiopia. CARE aims to improve household livelihood security for the target population in their operational areas through the promotion of well targeted programs, that are focused, sustainable and have a high, measurable impact.

CARE signed its first Basic Agreement with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (a government agency for coordinating NGOs and presently with the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission – DPPC) in 1984 and began emergency operations in the Eastern Hararghe region in 1985. This project is still in operation today, and based in Grawa with additional field offices in Bedeno and Kurfachele weredas, uses both food-for-work and non-food-for-work interventions to address issues related to long and short-term food security. The current project reaches an estimated 20,000 households annually.

Due to the extent of the 1984/85 famine, CARE was invited by the government to expand its operation to West Hararghe. Since then, it has undertaken a variety of interventions, spanning the whole spectrum from relief to development. Their current project is based in Asebe Teferi town and operates in the districts of Anchar, Guba Koricho, Kuni, Chira and Miesso. This five-year project (October 1996 – September 2001) emphasizes working with communities in a participatory manner to accomplish the project goal of improving household livelihood security. Currently, this project benefits approximately 23,000 households annually. Agricultural enhancement, health and improving household income are the major components applied in order to meet the project's objective. Project activities include water development, sanitation and hygiene education, irrigation and agricultural extension. The project also includes micro nutrient and family planning/HIV/AIDS component as complementary programs.

Additionally, CARE has an Emergency Operational Plan for 2000 in East and West Hararghe zones to provide 134,018 beneficiaries with food assistance.

CISP Provides Food Assistance in Exchange for Social Works

International Committee for the Development of Peoples (CISP) opened their offices in Ethiopia in 1986. They are supporting the development efforts of the Ethiopian Government in three Regions in Ethiopia. CISP has been present in Eastern Hararghe since 1994 and is based in Harar. Their programs mainly focus on water initiatives and food security in the Babile, Fedis, Goro Gutu, Gursum, and Kersa weredas.

In response to vast food needs in Eastern Hararghe caused by the drought, CISP's relief activities commenced in 1998 with Employment Generation Schemes (EGS) designed to provide food assistance in exchange for social works. During the first year of EGS programmes CISP provided 5,000 MT of cereals. In 1999, cereals provided amounted to 3,666 MT with a planned 3,912 MT for 2000. The European Commission is currently funding CISP's EGS programs. Together with the European Commission and the local government, CISP is initiating training for the EGS participants to provide skills and improve the quality of social works.

CISP's most recent development programs in East Hararghe began in January 1999 and will finish in June 2001. They work in close partnership with the appropriate zonal officials and are involved in water, capacity building, irrigation

and credit initiatives to assist some 100,000 to 200,000 people directly and benefit indirectly some 500,000. CISP is supporting the Oromiya Credit and Savings Share Company (OCSSO) by monitoring credit schemes targeting those poor who are good candidates for investing. The majority of credit schemes are farming and livestock activities. Although these schemes require more initial funds, they are easily sustainable and effective. One very successful revolving scheme is the provision of goats to women. Women in Kesa *Wereda* are given goats when they are young and sell them when they are fully grown. CISP also is involved in rural road construction, dam construction, nurseries, seedbanks, vocational training and health education. They select and base their programs on sound research and assessments to ensure the greatest impact from their activities.

MfM Commits to Timely Relief Interventions

Menschen fuer Menschen (MfM), founded by Austrian film star Karlheinz Boehm, has been active in Ethiopia for the past 19 years. Their first project in 1981 in the Erer valley assisting the settlement of 2,100 refugees has developed into an aid organization active in Ilubabor, Merhabete, Tigray and Hararghe.

Fedis, Babile and Gursum *weredas* in East Hararghe are regularly affected by drought and have been facing food shortages due to irregular and inadequate rainfall. Although not normally involved in food assistance MfM, together with the respective Federal and Regional Government bodies, committed itself to timely relief interventions in order to prevent the disastrous consequences from the recurrent drought. After completing assessments in these *weredas*, MfM's activities were designed to overcome the food shortage and sustain the nutritional status of beneficiaries while encouraging farmers to remain in their villages so that they could work on their fields. These interventions included the provision of cereals, supplementary food and seeds for cultivation. From May 2000 to October 2000 MfM is supplying over 120,000 beneficiaries, some 20,000 households, each month with 15kg of grain per person, 2 kg of milk powder per child, and 12.5 kg of seed for each household. In Harari Regional State they are reaching some 13,000 beneficiaries. Although the initial plan was to supply food up until the end of October, MfM is reassessing their program for the possibility of a longer duration.

Due to population pressure and hundreds of years of intensive farming practices, the degradation of natural resources were intensified. MfM believes that soil conservation and regeneration are among the basic needs in East Hararghe. Without fertile soil, agriculture is impossible and the production of food is therefore insufficient. Their programs in general encourage the population to protect the environment. This is complimented through various incentive programs. Such incentive programs include the building of schools, water systems and training of farmers in areas such as crop protection, terracing irrigation, etc.

Among MfM's successes in Eastern Hararghe, has been the establishment of an Agro-Technical Training College focusing on agriculture, electricity, automotive and metal works. Established in 1992, the school offers training to 250 students per year.

MfM's future plans in the drought stricken areas of East Hararghe will center on programs that effectively link relief to development.

HCS Monitors the Drought in East Hararghe

Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS) is operational in East and West Hararghe zones of Oromiya Region. Their areas of intervention are mainly in water supply, human and livestock health, relief food distribution and indigenous seed distribution. In addition to these interventions, HCS is monitoring the drought situation closely by conducting surveys that can be used as a basis for its activities and providing information on the status of the current drought.

A water supply intervention survey was undertaken in different parts of East Hararghe region. It is classified into three sub sectors: water tankering, existing source rehabilitation and new source development. Fedis, Kombolcha, Goloda and Gursum of *weredas* East Hararghe and Darolebo of Western Hararghe are sites selected for new source development schemes, in which a total of 1.2 million birr, (approximately US\$ 146,000) is allocated. The rehabilitation of the existing scheme was undertaken in Eastern Gararghe. The actual implementation of these programs is planned for October 2000.

HCS is also conducting livestock vaccination and treatment campaigns in East and West Hararghe zones. HCS used existing government teams and its own teams to implement this program, with the deployment of four veterinary teams to conduct the campaign.

Moreover, HCS is currently undertaking emergency relief food distribution program in different *weredas* of the region assisting some 72,000 beneficiaries by providing some 6,000 MT of food from October – December, 2000 in East Hararghe.

HCS also distributed different types of local seed for nine *weredas* in West Hararghe and four *weredas* of East Hararghe zones, a total of 150 MT and 243 MT respectively. The strategic approach of the seed program intervention is directed towards reinstating the normal production system of the community to save livelihoods and minimize the post drought response.