

WFP Ethiopia Input for the Emergency Report 04 February 2005

(a) Concerns persist about humanitarian conditions in the northern parts of the Afar region, where both karma rains (June-September main season rains) and Daada rains (short rains normally falling in November/December) have largely failed and negatively impacted important pasture availability in these areas, mainly inhabited by pastoralists. At this stage, major concerns are linked to animal health and pasture availability. However, though still not alarming, humanitarian partners are recognizing that food security indicators are deteriorating and there is a common understanding that regular food aid distributions have to be ensured during the coming months, in order to prevent further deterioration. In response to this situation, over 400,000 beneficiaries in the Afar region have received food rations consisting of cereals, corn soy blend and vegetable oil during January.

In Oromia region, surveillance of lowland parts of East and West Hararghe and Arsi zones also shows acute shortages in some areas. These areas will be covered by the government's Productive Safety Net Program, and in order to respond to immediate humanitarian needs, a total amount of 1,620 MT of emergency food was dispatched during January and is currently being distributed to the identified beneficiaries.

(b) In line with the Humanitarian Appeal for 2005, overall emergency food requirements for the month of February total 2.4 million beneficiaries, while 2.9 million people are expected to need food assistance by March. Due to current resource availability, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia will only be able to cover these needs for the month of February, while requirements for the month of March will remain largely uncovered unless new contributions are received. So far only 17% of the cereal needs for the month of March is secured, and a full break in the cereal pipeline will occur in April. Though the supply of other food commodities is adequate for the coming two months, supply of pulses and blended food will reduce by the month of April, and run out altogether by the month of May.

Emergency needs are traditionally less during the first few months of the year, but increase by May and June, when it is expected that as many as 3.1 million people will require emergency food assistance. New contributions to the weak pipeline would enable continued assistance to these food insecure populations and help avert deteriorating nutritional status in these communities.