

MR. MARTTI AHTISAARI, SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITING ETHIOPIA

Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Drought, accompanied by his adviser, Ms. Jaarva Meeri, WFP Representative, Ms. Daniela Owen, Deputy Director UNICEF Emergencies Division, Mr. Eric Laroche and OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Ms Olla Hassan, will arrive in Addis Ababa on 2 April and depart on 6 April. During his third trip to Ethiopia since his designation in June 2003, Mr Ahtisaari will review the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and the measures taken by the Government and relief agencies to break the cycle of hunger and poverty. The Special Envoy will meet with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, government officials, humanitarian agencies and international donors' representatives.

JOINT UN/DONOR/WORLD BANK RESETTLEMENT WORKING GROUP DEBRIEF DPM

The working group presents findings of the rapid assessment of resettlement sites to the Deputy Prime Minister on 2 April. Actions will be taken by the Ethiopian government and partners to address some immediate humanitarian concerns through the DPPC mechanism. The working group is set up to monitor current humanitarian conditions at the sites of the government voluntary resettlement programme in various parts of the country. After the teams have returned from visits to resettlement areas in Tigray, Amhara and Oromiya regions, the working group debriefed UN and NGOs on the findings of the mission earlier this week. For the most parts there is some urgency for food and non-food to be pre-positioned in the resettlement areas, many of which are in remote areas, ahead of the long rainy season of July-September.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE FOR AGRICULTURE EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT LACK OF DONOR RESPONSE FOR THE 2004 EMERGENCY APPEAL

Although the humanitarian needs for 2004 have been reduced from those of 2003 there are still about 7.2 million needy people in the country with 450,000 crop dependent households and 720,000 household beneficiaries in livestock subsector. A total of US\$ 13.2 million is required for seeds and livestock interventions. According to the Disaster Management Task Force for Agriculture, the government-led coordination forum for agricultural emergency assistance, comprising MoA, DPPC, FAO, USAID and NGOs, donor contribution concerning the agricultural intervention for seeds requirement 2004 is disappointing so far. FAO and USAID through various NGOs and the ICRC are the only agencies that have confirmed contributions. Since the Belg season is already lost, it is crucial to focus on the approaching Meher season for crop dependent areas. The urgency of interventions in pastoral areas should also be stressed. The Task Force therefore calls for a rapid response in order to save a significant number of people from food aid dependency.

GU RAINS STARTS IN SOMALI REGION

According to field observations, the Gu rain in Somali region has started in almost all areas of Jijiga and Shinille zones, while still limited in parts of Korahe and Warder In Gode zone rain was reported on 1 April. Though it is too early to assess the extent of the coverage, the rains are expected to provide relief to many pastoralists whose animals were badly affected by the long and severe dry season. To ease the continued critical water shortage in several parts of Korahe zone, UNICEF will finance water tankering operations by Action Contre la Faim (ACF). The water tankering will supply about 18,000 people in 22 sites with 126,000 litres of water per day, using 11 tanker trucks for the next 23 days that are expected critical for water availability.