



EFFECTIVE TREATMENT URGENTLY NEEDED TO ADDRESS MALARIA EPIDEMIC RISK IN 2004

The Federal ministry of Health (in collaboration with WHO) completed an efficacy study to ascertain levels of resistance to the existing first line treatment for malaria and confirmed that resistance was unacceptably high (average therapeutic failure rate of 36%). The concern, however, is that the new treatment (an Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy) is ten times more expensive than the previous, and now largely ineffective, mono therapy. According to the assessment, Ethiopia currently needs an estimated US\$ 7 million to pay for this treatment for the next 6 month epidemic period alone. The ministry also organized an anti-malaria drug policy review meeting in May of this year. As a result of Ethiopia's Roll Back Malaria partners, including WHO and UNICEF, are now in the process of rapidly mobilizing resources to assist the ministry with this essential and desperately needed drug policy change. OCHA-Ethiopia will be featuring the situation of malaria in the country and findings of the assessment on the next issue of **Focus on Ethiopia** to be published by the end of this month.

RISING CONCERNS IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

Based on recent assessments, several areas are of special concern, including Somali Region, East and West Hararghe, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). Some of the zones in SNNPR that were among those most highly affected by the serious drought of 2002/2003, are again under threat, this time as a result of the very poor rains of recent months. An assessment of the short season "Belg" crops (on which there is a high dependence in some parts of the region) was carried out by multi-agency teams in July. The season's crop performance was very poor in the SNNPR, mainly because of erratic rain, with the estimated yield losses ranging from 50-90% for major "Belg" crops. Physical status of livestock is reported generally good at the moment, due to availability of failed crops as livestock feed resources and occasional rains which have improved pasture conditions in most parts of the region. Considering the failure of "Belg" crops and the weak asset base of the inhabitants, the assessment teams concluded that the food security prospect of the region is very poor and external assistance is necessary to save many lives in the region in the second half of 2004. The number of people in needs is expected to considerably increase over the number of beneficiaries between January and June of this year.

JAPAN DONATES US\$ 3.4 MILLION FOR POLIO ERADICATION AND TETANUS ELIMINATION

The government of Japan has donated US\$ 3.4 million to UNICEF to support polio eradication and the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) in Ethiopia. The Japanese donation will be contributing to two nationwide polio immunisation rounds in early 2005. The campaign will target 95 per cent of children under five nationwide or and estimated 14.2 million children. Additional Japanese funds will also support three rounds of Tetanus Toxoid (TT) Supplementary Immunisation Activities for all women of childbearing age in nine selected zones in 2004-2005. A total of 2.72 million women of childbearing age will be targeted in the campaign.

DPPB/FSB ORGANIZED A REGIONAL COORDINATION MEETING IN SOMALI REGION

A regional coordination meeting was convened on 4 August under the direction of the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau and Food Security Bureau (DPPB/FSB) with OCHA assisting. At the meeting, OCHA was introduced to agencies, line bureaus and NGOs and explained its role in the coordination of humanitarian issues and its role in helping strengthen DPPB's coordination and response capacities. There was a good turn out with many agencies, line bureaus and government representatives participating. Participants were updated on post Gu assessment results which indicate a generalized lack of rains across much of the Somali region. Participants recognized that the situation is a serious one that demands immediate planning and preparations for a humanitarian response. The next coordination meeting is scheduled for September 7, and it is hoped that donors will be able to participate in order to help mobilize resources.

FAO CONTINUES ACTIVITIES IN EMERGENCY SEED INTERVENTION

FAO received funds from the Dutch government for strengthening Agricultural emergency coordination and response particularly for capacity building of staff in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) and agricultural bureaus of Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Tigray regions. The capacity building will focus on monitoring and evaluation of emergency seed intervention. Moreover 2,500 tonnes of seeds for late planted crops will be distributed to about 90,000 seed insecure households in selected seed insecure woredas of the regions.

Contributions are welcomed. Please submit to UN OCHA-Eth by COB Thursday, berhanem@un.org