



OCHA REPORTS CONCERNS IN EAST AND WEST HARARGHE ZONES OF OROMIYA

An OCHA field officer has returned from a field mission to East and West Hararghe Zones of Oromiya Region, 5-18 August. Findings indicate that similar to the belg rains, the meher season rains were delayed and erratic and there was an extended dry spell in May and June, especially in the lowland and midland areas. In the lowland areas (mainly, in Meisso, Guba Koricha, Mesela, Fedis woredas) crops have wilted due to critical moisture stress. As a result of unfavorable climatic conditions of belg and meher seasons a poor harvest is expected from the main food crops (maize and sorghum). Repeated replanting was practiced in most parts of the zones and the need for emergency seeds for meher season planting is immense. Nevertheless, emergency seeds provision was very late and inadequate in amount in all the woredas visited. In order to accomplish replanting within the remaining rainy season only chick pea seeds and sweet potato cuttings could still be provided. If these inputs are not received by the first week of September the already precarious food security situation of the area will deteriorate further. Targeting of relief food (general rations and supplementary food) is still problematic. There is a deep concern about increasing malnutrition in Alemaya, Fedis, Daro Labu, Guba Koricha and Mesela woredas. There are reports of unusual disease outbreak. Unless the meher rains extend up to end of September, there will be serious water shortages in both zones. In view of the deteriorating food security situation in East and West Hararghe zones, more attention needs to be given to early warning and emergency management both at zone and woreda levels. Coordination among humanitarian partners needs to be strengthened at all levels to deal with the current deteriorating humanitarian situation in both zones. For further information contact OCHA: ocha-eth@un.org

UPDATE ON MEASLES AND VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION CAMPAIGNS

In 2003, measles vaccination and vitamin A supplementation campaigns have reached 20.6 and 20.1 million children aged 6 months to 14 years respectively, in 41 zones of six regions in Ethiopia (i.e. 92.7 per cent and 90.6 per cent respectively of the targeted population). The Ministry of Health with support from UNICEF, WHO and Donors, has extended the measles campaign well into 2004, reaching so far 7.2 million children (or 89.2 per cent of the target) aged six months to 14 years during the period March-June 2004 in 21 zones, eight special woredas and 10 districts of Addis Ababa. Some 3.3 million of them, aged six to 59 months, received Vitamin A supplementation. All together, nearly 28 million children have received measles vaccination in Ethiopia over a period of 20 months. As a result of this campaign, Ethiopia did not experience any major measles outbreak throughout 2003 and 2004, even with the increased vulnerability caused by the 2002-03 drought. The on-going Enhanced Outreach Strategy for Child Survival (EOS/CS), implemented by the SNNPR Regional Health Bureau with support from UNICEF, is catching up and vaccinating the children who were too young (below 6 months) during the main campaigns and this project will later be extended to other regions. For further information contact UNICEF: awalker@unicef.org

WFP REFUGEE OPERATION FOOD PIPELINE IS EXPECTED TO BREAK IN OCTOBER

WFP refugee operation food pipeline is expected to break in October and urgent contributions are needed from donors. The total shortfall amounts to 5,500 tons of cereals for the remainder of 2004. As this commodity represents the bulk of the ration (providing 80 percent of the caloric intake), its shortage could have catastrophic effects on the nutritional status of refugees; it would also bring repatriation activities to a halt as WFP would not be able to provide repatriation packages to the Somali refugees. The effects of food shortages in volatile areas, such as Gambella, could also give rise to tensions that could result in further violence against the Government and the humanitarian organizations operating there. In spite of the relocation of its staff from Gambella, WFP continues providing assistance to some 60,000 Sudanese refugees located in this area of restricted UN travel, through Government counterparts. Food rations are playing an important role in this area as movement of refugees outside of the camps in search of additional income/activities is restricted due to the security situation and some crops have failed due to a reported dry spell in parts of Gambella region. For further information contact WFP: patrizia.patinutti@wfp.org

WFP AND UNHCR SUPPORT REPATRIATION OF SOMALI REFUGEES

WFP is supporting UNHCR in the repatriation of Somali refugees and the dispersal of Somali Ethiopians in Aysha and Kebribeyah camps, located in Somali Region. As of May 2004, a total of 5,018 refugees/dispersal cases were provided some 830 tons of food commodities to assist them once they reach their areas of origin in either Somalia or Ethiopia. The process will continue, with 4,750 refugees expected to be repatriated from August to October 2004. Repatriation activities should result in the closure of Aysha camp, possibly by the end of 2004. This will consolidate operations in the Somali Region in the Kebribeyah camp, where it is expected that the residual beneficiaries will be around 10,000. It is noteworthy that since 2000, six out of the original eight Somali refugee camps in Ethiopia have been closed with the voluntary repatriation of around 100,000 refugees, mainly to north-western Somalia. For further information contact WFP: patrizia.patinutti@wfp.org