

UNICEF-WFP JOINT INITIATIVE ON CHILD SURVIVAL

In Ethiopia infectious disease and malnutrition are inextricably linked; together they contribute significantly to the very high infant mortality rate. The 'Child Survival Project' is a proposed new pilot project based in SNNPR specifically aimed at increasing the chances of survival of some of the most vulnerable children in the Region. Driven by UNICEF as part of their Enhanced Outreach Strategy and in close collaboration with WFP, the underpinning strategy of the project is to closely link the delivery of health care with food distribution. Fifty-four highly affected districts (woredas) will be selected. The 3 years proposal has an initial focus on eighteen districts, adding eighteen districts each year, culminating in the inclusion of all 54 districts. A total population of 190,000 children between the ages of 6 to 59 months and 135,000 pregnant and nursing women will be targeted. Though only at an early stage, the project has already received significant support, at Regional level through discussion within both the Health and Nutrition Taskforce and Regional Bureaus, and at National level through discussion with Federal DPPC and the Ministry of Health. The project is initially scheduled from January 2004 until December 2006.

UN RESETTLEMENT WORKING GROUP HELD MEETING

UN Resettlement Working Group held a meeting on 11 February with the aim of defining ways on how to constructively engage with the Government of Ethiopia resettlement program. A joint approach provides an opportunity for agencies to identify ways of supporting resettlement within their respective mandates. The working group discussed the potential humanitarian concerns of the ongoing resettlement, to review checklist for monitoring the ongoing resettlement, to develop action plan to undertake assessments in other regions and other current issues. The group came up with two action plans: to pull together the concerns of UN team member agencies and finalize the draft guideline for monitoring resettlement, and OCHA to proceed facilitating the coordination and keep agencies informed on updates of humanitarian concerns. The working group also held a meeting with donors on the same day to approach jointly the issue of monitoring resettlement. To this end, the World Bank will bring consultants to develop a framework for monitoring the implementation of the program while USAID will hire consultants who will review and develop a system for monitoring the resettlement program.

SITUATION UPDATE: KONSO SPECIAL WOREDA, SNNPR

Konso Special Woreda benefits from two rainy seasons: belg (February to May) and meher (June to September) contributing 20% and 80% of the annual crop production of the area. In 2003, the woreda received good belg rains and had modest harvest from the season's production. However, there had been poor meher rains that resulted in crop failure. Compounded with the previous four years of recurrent drought and critical food shortage, currently 65,000 needy people are still affected and should receive relief assistance from January to June 2004. This year the belg rains started in the first part of January, one month earlier than the usual time. At the end of January land preparation for belg planting was almost completed as farmers exploited the early onset of the rains. Accordingly, farmers have started planting crops, mainly maize, sorghum and teff. The rains have improved regeneration of pasture and water replenishment in all parts of the woreda and traditional water wells are observed filled with water. Nevertheless, the early onset of the rains did not match with the anticipated supply of emergency seeds (445mt of assorted seeds for the belg season planting) planned for distribution, in February by government and NGOs, to the already identified 20,000 needy farmers in the woreda. It is recommended that the anticipated emergency seeds supply should reach the affected farmers as soon as possible by taking the timing of the belg rains into account.

WORLD VISION CONDUCTS NUTRITIONAL SURVEY IN WOGERA, NORTH GONDAR

World Vision Ethiopia, in cooperation with the Amhara Region DPPC, conducted nutritional survey in Wogera Woreda, North Gondar Zone. The survey was conducted as a follow up to a similar survey conducted last year. The results of the survey revealed that Severe and Global Acute Malnutrition rates were respectively 1.2% and 10.26%. This shows significant improvement from the previous year. 3.9% and 17.9% respectively. The improvement is ascribed to relief food intervention during the lean season and increased food supply from green harvest available to households. The above malnutrition rate, however, cannot be overlooked as these rates with aggravating factors put the nutritional status at a serious stage. Given a production decline of 19% from the previous year and with 40.3% of its population (91,000) affected in the year 2004, close monitoring and targeted food distribution need to be undertaken.