

WFP AND EC TO FINALIZE A CEREALS AVAILABILITY SURVEY

WFP and EC are currently finalizing a Cereals Availability Survey to examine the full potential for local purchases of cereals. Local purchase of food commodities can enhance the purchasing power of farmers and reinstate the flow of food from surplus to deficit areas, as well as supplying people in need of food aid. With a good overall harvest and local surpluses in many areas of the country, there will be significant opportunities for local purchases during 2004. Donors and other organizations are urged to their utmost to meet food aid needs, to the extent possible, through local purchases. If procurement is effected (or announced) in the early months of 2004, this will help to stabilize prices and benefit farmers. With 2004 cereal requirements at over 700,000 tons (under the 2004 Humanitarian Appeal for Ethiopia, released December 2003), there is scope for local purchases to cover part of these needs. However, the extent to which local purchases are possible will depend a great deal on the donors' willingness to contribute in cash for relief food needs. Purchases of pulses and famix (fortified blended food) can also be bought in substantial quantities in Ethiopia.

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS IN SNNPR

HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO) and UNICEF have developed a regional HIV/AIDS Plan of Action with NGO inputs as part of the emergency and recovery response for the first quarter of 2004. In the last two months, UNICEF in co-operation with regional HAPCO in SNNPR has conducted refresher training of 177 members from 20 Anti-Aids Clubs, training of 28 community dialogue facilitators from woreda staff of HAPCO and training of 18 DPPC workers from woreda DPPB offices, in Guraghe and Silte Zones. During the same period, 70,278 more food beneficiaries participated in community dialogue in three zones, with the involvement of NGOs. A total of 216,569 food beneficiaries participated in HIV/AIDS community dialogue in Sidama, Guraghe and Wolayta zones facilitated by UNICEF during the drought emergency in 2003. In Guraghe Zone, woreda HAPCO facilitators have been creative in mobilising communities where relief food distribution is not occurring, linking community dialogue with regular programs.

SC US MALARIA INTERVENTIONS IN SNNPR

Save the Children USA (SC US) has been actively implementing emergency health and nutrition programs in SNNPR region since March 2003. Recognizing the need to integrate malaria response in nutritional/health activities and responding to the call of the Ethiopian government, SC US is strengthening its malaria intervention activities in all emergency operational areas in SNNPR. This integrated malaria response entails coordinated/multisectoral community and health facility capacity building aimed at reducing mortality and morbidity from malaria outbreaks. Since December 2003, SC US has been providing Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions in early detection, improved case management and overall environmental management. Trainees include both SC US staff engaged in life-saving emergency therapeutic/supplementary programs, as well as woreda health officials. To date, the results show a growing pool of health workers, community health workers and community based malaria agents (CBMA) trained by persons who received TOT. In Kembata Tambaro Zone alone, 10 health workers and 113 community health workers (CHW) and CBMA have participated in capacity building workshops. Activities in other woredas/zones will continue through February 2004. SC/US is also conducting small scale studies on Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) utilization among Therapeutic Feeding Center (TFC) beneficiaries. One recent survey found that 76% of beneficiaries were properly utilizing nets, while utilization among the remaining 24% was inadequate or nonexistent. SC US also intends to independently procure ITNs for distribution in the near future.

WORLD VISION RESUMED WATER TRUCKING OPERATION IN AFAR

Water trucking, which was terminated in August 2003 due to improvements in water availability in Afar Region, has resumed since the first week of January 2004 as a result of increased need. UNICEF financed the operation. The objective of the operation to improve potable water supply in 4 sites of Dubti woreda, which is one of the severely affected areas in water stress problems even under normal conditions. The trucking operation serving 8,000 beneficiaries, will continue for three.