



DPPC-LED MULTI-AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF THE SHORT SEASON "BELG" CROPPING AREAS AND PASTORAL REGIONS DEBRIEFS HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

A debriefing was held at the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) by the teams of the recent DPPC-led multi-agency assessment of the short season "belg" cropping areas and pastoral regions. Several areas of significant concern have been identified among areas which are dependent on "belg" season crops. The teams also reported on the progress of the main season "meher" or "kiremt" rains, which have been poor to non-existent so far in certain lowland areas in the east and south of the country. In these areas, early-planted long-cycle crops normally harvested later in the year have also been negatively affected by long dry spells in April-May or May-June (depending on location). Full details will be available when the DPPC report is finalized.

OCHA ORGANIZES A MEETING TO LOOK AT POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO SOMALI REGION

As a result of the reports of the above mentioned assessment teams and other worrying information received from Somali Region, OCHA held an information sharing meeting on 21 July with regional DPP Bureau representatives, NGOs, ICRC and UN agencies, to discuss the situation and response plans. While severe conditions have been observed in several areas, these should not be generalized for the whole region at this point. However it is agreed that urgent non-food response is required in many locations and that close monitoring of factors influencing the pastoralists' livelihoods and food security is very necessary. The assessment teams recommended that food aid be expanded to cover some areas not currently receiving assistance, such as Gashamo district of Degahbur zone, and extended in other zones for several months. In June, approximately one million beneficiaries in Somali Region were receiving food assistance, out of the national total of 6.9 million beneficiaries. DPPC is reviewing food and other requirements for Somali Region in consultation with regional authorities. For further information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

FUNDS SOUGHT FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ANTI-MALARIAL TREATMENT

Ethiopia's Roll Back Malaria partners, including UNICEF and WHO, are trying to rapidly mobilize \$6.9 million in resources to assist the Ministry of Health in paying for a new, more effective anti-malarial treatment for a six-month period. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO, completed an efficacy study earlier this year, which found unacceptably high resistance rates to the existing first line treatment. An anti-malarial drug policy review meeting in May agreed to switch to the more effective but more expensive Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACT). Malaria is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Ethiopia, with approximately 48 million people living in malaria risk areas. In 2003, a major epidemic affected the country following the drought emergency, weakening already vulnerable populations. Even highland areas previously unaffected experienced outbreaks. Within a six month period, an estimated 6.1 million malaria cases occurred, with approximately 45,000 to 110,000 deaths. UNICEF says that the new ACT therapy will be much more effective in combating a malaria epidemic. For further information contact UNICEF: awalker@unicef.org

UNICEF, OCHA ACCOMPANY USAID/OFDA MISSION TO CHEWAKA AND HARO TATESA RESETTLEMENT SITES

The UNOCHA Head of Office and UNICEF Head of its Emergency Section accompanied the USAID Country Director, the Deputy Assistant Administrator of USAID Washington DC, Mr. Leonarn Rogers and the OFDA Ethiopia representative to the Chewaka and Haro Tatessa resettlement sites in Illubabor zone, western Oromiya from 18-20 July. The Head of Oromiya Agriculture and Rural Development Coordination Bureau and the Head of Oromiya Food Security office also participated. WFP staff from Addis Ababa also joined the mission on site. The mission noted substantive improvements in conditions in the two sites during the past two month which have a combined population of nearly 90,000 persons. Cereals (provided by regional authorities), supplementary food, oil and pulses (provided by WFP/DPPC) have been prepositioned with good storage facilities to last through the rainy season. Health posts were operational and well stocked with drugs. Wet feeding for children under 5 was also being carried out and malnutrition cases have decreased significantly. Roads to the two sites have been improved and should provide continuous access through the rainy season. Planting of main crops has been late and not totally sufficient, which is likely to mean continued need for food assistance through 2004 and 2005. Significant private commercial activity has sprung up and basic goods are available in the local market. Concern was expressed by local officials on access to many of the more than 49 other smaller sites in the region where all weather roads have not been completed and access to health and nutrition is not as well established. Food has been prepositioned in all sites but in some places for only two month. Further assistance from aid agencies and the UN is under consideration. For further information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

WFP AND UNHCR MADE A MISSION TO GAMBALLA

A joint WFP/UNHCR mission was made to Gambella region to assess the current situation in Bonga and Dima camps, accompanied by the WFP field security officer, and traveling with military escort. In general the food situation in the camps is not serious, as WFP food aid has been reaching the camps regularly. UNHCR is reviewing current non-food needs. Monitoring in the camps is still not possible due to the absence of UN staff on the ground, as UN security guidelines have not allowed permanent UN presence in the area since early January 2004. At this time only four-day missions are permitted. Certain WFP/NGOs activities in the camps have been interrupted, such as grinding mill services for the refugees and the bakery project run by women's associations (Bonga camp). Fugnido camp was not visited due to security problems. For further information contact WFP: paul.turnbull@wfp.org

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

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