

WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture, the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO) and UNICEF convened a three day workshop on strengthening youth participation in Ethiopia on Wednesday 3 March. The workshop launched the findings of the national study on anti-AIDS clubs in Ethiopia conducted by the Ministry, HAPCO and UNICEF. The workshop also explored strategies and developed guidelines on strengthening the role of youth clubs in development activities and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

JOINT CROP ASSESSMENT MISSION IN AMHARA REGION

A joint FAO/Amhara Regional Bureau of Agriculture mission carried out field assessment in drought-prone areas of Amhara Region from 22 January to 2 February. The mission visited five woredas and five Zonal administrations (South Gonder, North Gonder, Wag Hemra, South Wollo and North Wollo zones).

Despite the good harvest of the 2003 seasons throughout the country, there are about 2 million food insecure people in need of external assistance in Amhara region in 2004. The number of needy people has decreased by nearly 50% as compared to that of last year. Erratic rains were the main causes of crop losses that led such a large number of beneficiaries, 400,000 farm households and families, who are unable to produce sufficient food for the year. In addition to the shortage of rain that mostly affected the lowland areas of the region, significant damage was also caused by excessive rains that occurred in the form of hail and storm in the mid and higher altitude areas. FAO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Amhara Bureau of Agriculture, prepared a project proposal for external funding to supply seeds of the major cereals and pulses crops for planting in the coming Meher season.

UN-DONORS CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

UN-Donors joint working group held series of discussions on monitoring resettlement in order to engage constructively with the government. Head of the resettlement program in MoARD, attended one of the meetings and explained the government's plan to resettle 2.2 million people in 3-5 years and stressed the need for donor support for the program. He underlined the importance of a good monitoring and evaluation framework and emphasized that it emanates from the 'concept paper' developed by the government for monitoring and evaluating food security program. A representative from Oromia State, who is in charge of resettlement issues, has also attended one of the joint meetings. Heads of UN agencies and donors held meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and discussed the joint initiative underway on resettlement. The UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator briefed the outcome of the high level meeting to the technical working group members, underlining the need to focus on the humanitarian concerns, and mobilizing assistance if required in particular by UN agencies. USAID consultants presented their wrap up report on the 'framework for monitoring and evaluation of the voluntary resettlement program. They built upon UN Team's draft resettlement monitoring matrix compiled by OCHA. World Bank consultants presented their findings on their two weeks long assessment on resettlement in Oromia, SNNPR and Amhara Regional States. Action points were taken based on extensive discussions to review available reports and identify gaps and form teams to conduct rapid assessments on issues of potential humanitarian concern in the resettlement areas. OCHA continues to facilitate the coordination of the joint initiative of monitoring resettlement for possible active engagement with the government.

EFSR UPDATE

Ethiopia Food Security Reserve (EFSR) stocks on hand are 349,589.53mt, stock under withdrawal 32,565mt and outstanding loans equal 22,850.3mt as of 4 March 2004.