



OCHA AND UNICEF UNDERTAKING ASSESSMENT MISSION IN GAMBELLA

OCHA and UNICEF are conducting an assessment mission in Gambella (12-18 October). This is the first assessment to look at the overall humanitarian situation in the area since the outbreak of violence in December 2003. The objective is to gather information on the overall humanitarian situation and to identify gaps in relation to the situation of internally displaced persons needs for food and non-food sectors, in particular health and nutritional status, water and education; specific needs of vulnerable groups and on human rights issues. OCHA and UNICEF will debrief humanitarian partners on their return. ocha-eth@un.org

RAPID ASSESSMENT TO SOMALI REGION

A joint UN team has recently returned from a rapid assessment of the humanitarian impact of the extended drought in Somali Region. The team found that in many districts of seven of the nine zones there were widespread livestock loss due to a lack of water and pasture. Although there were no major human disease outbreaks noted, concerns about the welfare of vulnerable people are increasing due to the shortage of clean water. The mostly pastoralist region is presently waiting for the *Deyr* short rains to come. If the rains fail or are poor they are facing an almost total loss of their remaining livestock with negative humanitarian consequences as a result of impoverishment or total destitution. Should the rains arrive, then it will only be a short term respite until the beginning of the major *Gu* rains starting next April through May. On 15 October, the team presented their findings to UN Agencies, donors, Government and NGOs. The full report can be found at www.ocha-eth.org

PERFORMANCE OF MEHER RAINS IMPROVED IN EAST AND WEST HARARGHE

OCHA undertook a rapid field situation assessment in East and West Hararghe zones of Oromia Region from 5-12 October. The performance of *Meher* rains has improved in the highlands and midland areas of both zones. This will have positive implications in terms of water sources replenishment, pasture improvement, growth and performance of crops. Rains must continue until the end of October for a better harvest. The ongoing relief food distribution (planned only until end of September) needs to be continued until December. The need for supplementary food is still critical, especially for the severely malnourished children receiving intensive nutrition treatment in stabilization centers. Zone officials reported their concerns and worries for the likely increased infestation of malaria (in the lowland areas) when the *Meher* season is over. ocha-eth@un.org

APDA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER CURRENT SITUATION IN AFAR

The Afar Pastoralist Association (APDA) reports this month there has been about five days of periodic, isolated storms bringing some relief. However, the status of pasture in most major grazing areas is poor – little grass has rejuvenated and there is a particular dry-belt through the center of the region: Western Dubte Woreda, Awra, Teeru and extending up to Zone 2. The northern sector of Eli Daar Woreda remains totally dry. The prospects of increasing disease outbreaks in animals due to poor quality pasture is very imminent. afarpastoral@telecom.net.et