



FOCUS ON *Ethiopia*

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Focus on Ethiopia is produced by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in collaboration with other UN agencies and partner NGOs. Focus on Ethiopia provides a monthly overview of humanitarian trends and activities in Ethiopia, focusing on particular issues of interest. Send comments, suggestions and contributions to ocha-eth@un.org

HUMANITARIAN REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT:

The Government and Humanitarian Partners' issued a joint Humanitarian Requirements Document that summarizes emergency food and non-food requirements in 2009 identified by the multi-agency assessment conducted during November/December 2008. A total of 4.9 million beneficiaries are identified to require emergency assistance in 2009. The document seeks for a **total net emergency requirement including food needs for the year and non-food needs for the first six months of 2009 amounts to USD 454,396,769.**

The net food requirement stands at 450,611 MT, amounting to USD 389,327,904. In addition, an estimated 1.2 million beneficiaries will be reached with a net 30,327 MT of supplementary food that amounts USD 26,202,528. A total of USD 38,866,337 is requested to respond to non-food needs of identified beneficiaries in the health and nutrition, water and sanitation and agriculture and livestock sectors.

The effects of food insecurity caused by poor performance of seasonal rains, poor crop production coupled with the soaring cereal prices posed several humanitarian challenges to the lives and livelihoods of many in some areas in eastern half of the country. Favourable food security prospects are, however, expected in the western *meher* crop producing areas.

As the year progresses, any other unanticipated emergencies will be addressed through flash appeals or contingency plans as appropriate. The overall federal and regional humanitarian coordination will be undertaken by Disaster Management and Food Security Sector (DMFSS) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD).



Summary of Humanitarian Requirements (in USD)

Sector	Total Req't	Available Resources	Net Req't
General Ration: Gross: 591,503 MT (478,950 MT cereals; 14,368 MT oil; 47,895 MT pulse; 50,290 MT blended food) Net: 450,611 MT	511,058,592	121,730,688	389,327,904
Supplementary food for EOS/TSF: Gross: 59,127 MT (53,065 MT blended food, and 6,062 MT oil) Net: 30,327 MT	51,085,728	24,883,200	26,202,528
Food sub-total	562,144,320	146,613,888	415,530,432
Health and Nutrition	24,173,823	1,009,434	23,164,389
Water and Sanitation	6,169,213	-	6,169,213
Agriculture and Livestock	9,532,735	-	9,532,735
Non-food sub-total	39,875,771	1,009,434	38,866,337
GRAND TOTAL	602,020,091	147,623,322	454,396,769

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:

In 2009 and beyond, a more lasting disaster risk management (DRM) approach, rather than short-lived crisis management, will be promoted in line with the Government's current strategy to streamline and reform disaster management task. The approach envisages vulnerability profile based Disaster Management (DM), which targets comprehensive response to potential as well as impeding disasters by addressing all elements of the DM cycle, including hazard assessment and mapping, vulnerability and risk analyses and enhanced preparedness for providing timely and appropriate response, mitigation, recovery and prevention.

Due emphasis will be given to further strengthen hazard monitoring, forecasting, and early warning capabilities. Effective and efficient hazard Early Warning and Response System will be put in place during the year in areas where WoredaNet is fully operational and in two years time where it is not yet fully operational. Early warning information will be prepared in different languages and designed in such a way that it reaches end users within one day in order to assist mitigate adverse impacts of emergencies. Government and Humanitarian partners will continue to monitor Early Warning indicators through the joint working groups to facilitate appropriate response. Vulnerability profiles will be developed for all woredas within five years time.

As part of strengthening preparedness, stand-by capacity will be set-up in strategic locations, which is inline with the overall plan of the Government to decentralize emergency response. The Government, in collaboration with humanitarian partners, will enhance the information management system in such a way that it can track or

assess available relief stocks nationwide and know "who has what and where". The findings will increase awareness of available capacities in order to identify gaps and outstanding requirements for timely response.

The overall DRM plan will also articulate the underlying and associated causes and implications of disaster vulnerability in an attempt to help policy makers, planners, practitioners, and communities to design appropriate, targeted risk reduction and awareness, disaster management, and development of programs.

REGIONAL SUMMARY

The Regional Summaries provide highlights of the findings of the multi-agency needs assessment (November/December 2008). A multi-disciplinary team was deployed in the affected areas to identify emergency food and non-food requirements including Health and Nutrition, Water and Sanitation and Agriculture and Livestock. Household Economy Approach was utilized in all the regions, apart from Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz.

SOMALI

The food security situation in Somali Region has not significantly improved due to deteriorating terms of trade, reduction in livestock production and income as a result of poor performance of consecutive seasonal rains. Although the *deyr* rains (October to November 2008) have brought much relief in terms of availing pasture and water, their contribution in terms of reducing overall food insecurity was insignificant.

Although food prices have shown a declining trend, they still remain at record high levels. With limited livestock to sell and high food prices, pastoralists will continue to struggle to not only meet their basic food and non-food needs, but to take action to recover their primary livelihood assets. Pastoralists will continue to face conditions of stress and it will take several good seasons for livelihoods to recover. Therefore, a total of 1,550,143 people need immediate food assistance in 2009.

The overall performance of the 2008 *deyr* rains in the seven *deyr*-receiving zones of the region was good in comparison to previous years. Exceptions are limited areas in Warder and Korahe zones where the amount of rain was insufficient. However, the *karan* rains in Jijiga and Shinille zones were poor, resulting in poor crop performance and inadequate water and pasture for livestock. Nonetheless, while the impact of the *karan* rains was very low, the unseasonal rains later on improved pasture and water in *karan*-receiving areas, except in some areas of Shinille and Aysha woredas. In 2009, water and pasture shortages will be most acute in many areas of Shinille and Jijiga and some pocket areas of Korahe and Warder zones, particularly during the first two months of the *jilal* long dry season. Additionally, crop production is expected to be much below normal, due to the failed rains earlier in the year, flooding in some areas of Gode zone, and pocket areas with pest infestation.



Significant numbers of livestock have died in the region in preceding seasons due to drought and shortages of water and pasture. Cattle and shoats were the most affected. This has resulted in the reduction of calving, especially with cattle and sheep, reducing herd size. This also has a negative effect on the majority of households due to limited availability of milk and milk products as well as reduced ability to sell livestock, seriously affecting food security of the rural population. The unseasonal rains had no impact on immediate livestock or crop production, since the previous seasons had failed. Furthermore, reduction in the number of breeding and lactating animals has resulted in poor milk production in the pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones.

The main source of water in many areas of the region is underground. As a result boreholes need to be maintained properly to ensure availability of water, both for human and livestock consumption.

The poor supply of grains in the local markets and the high price of cereals and imported food items continue to affect purchasing power of the rural communities. Prices of staple food commodities are increasing throughout the region with declining livestock prices, especially for cattle. The situation is complicated by the poor supply of food commodities in local markets. The problem is most critical in Korahe, Warder, Degehabur, Gode and Fik zones.

Pastoral, agro-pastoral, sedentary and riverine livelihood zones offer only limited alternative income sources. Income has been critically affected by crop failure and the significant decline in livestock production. Additionally there is unusual labour migration to neighbouring urban areas and bordering countries like Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti.

AFAR

Food security prospects are not promising for agro-pastoralist and pastoralist households in Afar Region due to significant crop and livestock losses as a result of the poor performance of seasonal rains. An estimated 472,229 people in the Region are already receiving assistance in the form of cash and food transfers under the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). However, in light of the current food security situation there is an urgent need to provide additional emergency food aid to 86,428 people that are not currently eligible for assistance under the auspices of the PSNP over the next six months.

Afar Region typically receives *karma* rains between the last week of June and first week of September. The *karma* rains are critical to ensure the production of crops in Asaale, Cheno and Awssa Gewane zones where agro-pastoralism is the most widely practiced form of livelihood among the population. However, the onset of the 2008 *karma* rains was delayed in most parts of the Region, in some cases by five weeks, and the performance of the rains was below normal in amount and distribution.

In addition to the poor performance of the *karma* rains, livelihoods and household assets in some localities of Afambo, Asaita, Dubti and Mille woredas in zone 1 and Dallol woreda in zone 2 were damaged by flooding caused by unseasonal rains at the end of October. The unseasonal rains did lead to a temporary alleviation of water and pasture scarcity in some parts of the region, however, it is expected that there will be a further decline in availability of essential natural resources with the arrival of the *jilal* dry season.



The poor performance of the *karma* rains has had a detrimental impact on both agricultural and livestock production in many parts of the region. According to the findings of the multi-agency assessment, the below normal performance of the *karma* rains has led to a significant loss of crops, including sorghum, maize, barley and teff, in agro-pastoral livelihood zones with losses running as high as 100 percent in Abaala woreda. The main drivers of poor crop performance and crop losses are the poor performance of the *karma* rains, flood damage and pest infestation in some woredas. However, the picture with regard to crop performance in Afar Region is not uniform as some households in Gewane, Aysaita, Dubti, Afambo, Ewa and Awra woredas expect good harvest due to increased cultivation of land and use of irrigation practices.

According to the findings of the multi-agency assessment, there has been a significant reduction in the size of camel, cattle and shoaat herds as a result of the drought, environmental degradation and adoption of coping strategies including sale of animals. Water, pasture and browse availability for livestock is below normal as a direct consequence of the insufficient and erratic performance of the seasonal rains. Livestock death has been reported in some woredas due to disease problem including pasteurelloses, Contagious Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (CBPP), Peste-des-Petit-Ruminants (PPR), lumpy skin and an undefined disease affecting camels. Additionally, overall, the physical condition of animals is poor. A number of livestock diseases have been reported including; however, the prevalence of such diseases has not yet reached outbreak level.



The Regional Health Bureau (RHB) began a measles vaccination campaign on the 12th of January in response to the reported cases of measles in Bidu and Kori woredas. The RHB vaccination campaign is targeting 4,000 children under the age of 15 years in high-risk kebeles of Kori, Afdera and Bidu woredas.

OROMIYA

In Oromiya Region, the poor performance of seasonal rains, extremely high price of staple foods, weather adversities like torrential rain, over-flooding of rivers in some areas and death of livestock contributed to food insecurity to 683,839 people in the coming months.

In 2008, the arrival of the *belg* rains was delayed by as much as two months in some areas. The amount of rain received during the *belg* season was well below normal and, as a result, the season was classified as a near total failure in the region. However, the onset of the *meher* season was on time in most parts of the region with the exception of some lowland areas in East Hararghe, Bale, Arsi, and West Arsi zones. Unseasonable rains occurred after the cessation of the *meher* rains at the end of October/ early November and led to flooding and landslides in some parts of the region.

This year, due to the failure of the *belg* rains, land preparation and planting of long-maturing crops was delayed by two to three weeks. With regard to the short maturing varieties of *meher* season crops, land preparation and planting took place according to the normal schedule. However, most *meher* crops in lowlands of Oromiya mainly in East and West Hararghe, West Arsi, Bale, Arsi, were threatened by critical moisture stress during the flowering and grain-filling stages. In addition, heavy rains, hailstorm and flooding in highland areas in August and November caused significant damage to crops. Favorable conditions are, however, reported in most of the Western half of the region.



Agro-pastoralists in Oromiya Region have incurred a significant loss of crops. The major reasons for the loss of crops in the region include inadequate land preparation and late planting of crops due to the poor *belg* rainfall, army worm infestation, decreased use of fertilizer and early withdrawal of the *meher* rains at the end of August while crops were at critical growth stages.

There have been no reports of livestock diseases reaching epidemic level. Nevertheless, the last dry season has already had a significant impact on herd size and livestock production with negative implications for the food security situation. Many lowland areas in the pastoralist areas of Guji and Borena have experienced a serious shortage of water and pasture leading to significant deaths of livestock. The drop in herd size and reduced calving rates of animals has reduced the availability of milk which is a major source of income and food in pastoralist areas. However, following the favorable rainfall condition during the *meher* season, pasture and water availability did temporarily improve in most parts of the region.

The threat to health posed by Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) has been contained and there are no reports of the disease reaching an outbreak level in the region.

SNNP

Although the overall food security situation is stable in most parts of the region due to favourable performance of *meher* rains, the extended adverse impacts of poor *belg* rains mainly in coffee producing areas continued to be witnessed. Crop planting near Omo and Weito rivers was also affected by reduced overflow of the rivers. Additionally, floods damaged crops in Shashego woreda. A total of 881,740 people will, therefore, require emergency food assistance in 2009.

The *meher* rains were timely in onset and cessation, although slight delay was reported in Hamer and Bena Tsemay woredas of South Omo and early cessation in some parts of Konso and Burji Special zone. The *meher* rains were rated as normal to above normal in most parts of the region and were accompanied with weather adversities like flooding, hailstorms, and landslides. Flooding was reported in Shashego woreda of Hadiya zone, Lanfuro and Silti woredas of Silte zone, Duguna Fango woreda of Wolayita zone, Aroresa woreda of Sidama zone, and Marako woreda of Gurage zone. In addition, the Omo and Weito rivers overflowed in Dassanech, Hamer, Male, and Nyangatom. Hailstorms were reported in Meskan and Kebena woredas of Gurage zone, East Badawacho woreda of Hadiya zone, Bona, Dale and Bursa woredas of Sidama zone, and Kindo Koisha, Damot Woide, Damot Sore and Sodo Zuria woredas of Wolayita zone.

Significantly larger areas have been planted with *meher* crops compared to both the reference year and the last *meher* season. The area planted with wheat increased by 46 percent in Gurage zone and 11 percent in Hadiya zone compared to last year; with maize by 29 percent in Gurage zone and 22 percent in Silte zone; and with pepper by 61 percent in Silte zone and 25 percent in Gurage zone. The major reason for the increased planting area was due to the replacement of *belg* crops by *meher* crops. Nevertheless, the area planted in pocket areas has declined. In South Omo zone, the area planted with recession agriculture was significantly low, since a lesser proportion of land was flooded by the Omo and Weito rivers due to below average rainfall in August. Similarly, the area planted with sweet potato significantly declined in Wolayita, Gamo Gofa, Kembeta Tembaro and southern Hadiya zones due to shortage of cuttings.



Meanwhile, the heavy rain significantly affected early planted *meher* crops, especially *teff*. Most of the visited woredas estimated a yield loss of 20-25 percent on *teff*. Approximately 15,303 hectares were damaged in Shashego woreda of Hadiya zone, 933 hectares in Nyangatom, over 5,000 hectares in Dassanech, and 40 hectares in Dalocha woreda of Silte zone. It was accompanied by hailstorms in pocket areas in Gurage, Wolayita and Sidama zones.

The prolonged dry spell during the last *belg* season resulted in coffee flowering once instead of three times, causing a high yield loss in plants expected to be harvested in December. Accordingly, the current season coffee production is anticipated to fall by about 67 percent in Sidama zone and 53 percent in Gedeo zone compared to last year's harvest.

In the overall, crops are expected to perform better than the last *meher* or the reference year due to favourable weather conditions, timely planting, and increased agricultural input utilization.

The above-average *meher* rains also improved availability of pasture and water, which improved livestock body condition. Unusual livestock movement was widely noted earlier in the year due to the poor *belg* rains. There are no reports of unusual mortality or morbidity of livestock except in South Omo zone with reports of disease outbreaks such as AHS (African Horse Sickness) in North and South Ari woredas, Contagious Bovine Pleuro-pneumonia (CBPP) in Salamago woreda, Contagious Caprine Pleuro-pneumonia (CCPP) in Dasenech, Nyangatom, Bena-Tsemay and Hamer woredas, Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in Nyangatom and Male woredas, and Peste-des-Petit-Ruminants (PPR) in Dasenech, Hamer, and Bena-Tsemay woredas. PPR is the most severe epidemic reported as it is highly contagious.

Market prices of food crops have significantly declined compared to the previous months throughout the region as the current season's production has come to the markets. The price of maize in the key reference markets declined by 140-170 percent during October - November compared to that of July - August. While this is still well above last year's and the last five years' average, it is not a matter of particular concern in areas that predominantly depend on food crop production because high prices during harvest months mean that farmers/producers are securing more money than before. However, households in those areas mostly depending on cash crop production, poor households in urban areas, and pastoralists are likely to suffer much more from high prices of staple food crops.

Livestock prices have also shown a declining trend in recent months. It will continue to decline in the coming months in most parts of the region, partly because of the reduced coffee harvest and the subsequent decline of purchasing power in areas dependent on coffee production. Livestock prices were declining even faster in pastoral areas due to falling demand.

Poor performance of this year's coffee production reduced daily labour opportunities and wage rates in the predominantly coffee producing areas. In Sidama and Gedeo zones the coffee labour wage rate declined by 30-35 percent compared to the same period last year, as large numbers of people are competing for minimal labour opportunities.

AMHARA

The failure of *belg* rains in Amhara Region in the first half of 2008, high food prices, impacts of the unseasonal rains, limited labor opportunities, and erratic performance of *meher* in eastern lowlands areas significantly affected the vulnerable households that heavily depend on food purchase. As a result, an approximately 995,095 people are estimated to require emergency food assistance for a period of six to eight months in 2009.

The failure of *belg* rains has negatively impacted large numbers of households in the region. Nonetheless, the overall weather condition during the *meher* season in most parts of the region has been favorable for crop production. In some lowland parts of the region, however, shortages of rain have been experienced. Despite such positive outlooks, in production at the regional level, significant yield losses in connection to weather irregularities have been recorded in most lowland eastern zones and a few woredas in North and South Gondar.



Some parts of South Wollo, North Wollo and North Shewa have lost their livestock asset due to drought and related challenges. Nonetheless, the overall physical condition of livestock in all zones is normal. Water and pasture availability have improved in most parts of the region due to relatively good weather condition and positive impact of untimely rains in October/November. Apart from reports of endemic diseases including pasteurulosis, blackleg, and lumpy skin disease in Oromiya zone, sheep pox, internal and external parasites, CBPP and pasteurulosis in some woredas of South Wollo, there have not been any livestock disease outbreaks.

Food prices had been sharply rising throughout the region during the first eight to nine months of 2008. However, this trend has changed since September/October and prices of food grains have continued to show some declines following increased market supply from the fresh harvest.



Nonetheless, this year price levels are significantly higher compared to the past few years, including 2006, the reference year for regional level Household Economy Analysis (HEA). According to the recent assessment, the regional level rise in the prices of food and cash crops in 2008, on average, have been 300 percent to 450 percent compared to those of the preceding two years. Significant hikes have also been observed in prices of livestock and wage labor with records of considerably lower rates compared to the staple foods.

TIGRAY

Food security situation in most parts of Eastern, Southern and South Eastern zones of Tigray has deteriorated considerably due to the poor performance of *belg/meher* season, sharp increase of food prices, low demand for agricultural labour, reduction of livestock prices and deteriorating physical condition of livestock. As a result, the multi-agency assessment team has identified 674,304 estimated beneficiaries for emergency assistance.

The major sources of income in Tigray are crop production, livestock and livestock products, local and migratory labour and income from PSNP. The overall crop production prospect this year was rated as poor compared to last year and the reference year (1997/1998) in almost all woredas of Eastern, South-Eastern, Southern zones and Tanqua Abergele woreda and other pocket areas of Central zone.

Similarly, income from livestock, livestock products and labour has also been seriously affected. Due to the failure of the *belg* rains and the poor performance of the *Azmara/meher* rain the labour demand has decreased. The production of honey, which is an important source of income in eastern parts of Tigray, was reported to be very low. In Erob woreda, the production of honey was only four percent when compared to production during the reference year.

The *meher* season in 2008 was favorable for better pasture regeneration and availability of water for livestock in the western and most parts of central zone. However, the amount and distribution of rainfall was very poor and the absence of rains resulted in severe shortage of water and pasture for livestock in most woredas of Eastern and Southern zones, particularly in Raya valley livelihood zone in the Raya Azebo and H/Wajirat woredas.

The main coping strategies in the region are sale of additional livestock, intensification of local and migratory labour, wild fruit collection and sale of trees, fire wood and charcoal. The sale of additional livestock is unlikely at this time due to decreases in herd size, poor animal body condition and poor market prices.

GAMBELLA

Due to effects of floods and hailstorms between July to October 2008, reduced production of *meher* harvests contributed to deteriorated food security situation in parts of Gambella Region.

The prospect of secondary season harvest from the recession agriculture practiced along the banks of Baro and Gilo rivers is also very poor due to the prolonged flooding that has affected late planting. Considering the various shocks on production as well as the contribution of the various coping mechanisms available to affected communities (fishing, hunting, wild fruit and root gathering and honey collection), the multi-agency assessment team identified a total of 31,000 people in the region requiring 3,446 MT of relief food assistance in 2009.

In 2008, *meher* rains arrived on time and the intensity and distribution of the rains during the usual rainy period was normal. However, unseasonable rainfall in October resulted in flooding in the flood prone woredas along Baro, Gilo and Akobo rivers. Additionally, some of the flood prone woredas experienced moderate floods in July/August. Floods have affected *meher* crops in Itang, Jikawo, Wentwa, Akobo, Lare and Gambella woredas. Maize planted in Gog and Jor woredas using recession farming have also been destroyed by floods. Following *meher* harvest, recession agriculture normally provides a second season production to several communities along major rivers.



Nonetheless, favorable weather conditions during the main rainy season allowed timely agricultural activities including land preparation and planting. Areas cropped this year have reportedly increased by about 20 percent compared to the average in the last five years. Provision of approximately 163 MT of varieties of seeds to ten woredas by the regional government, and mobilization conducted by the woreda administrators and the Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development Office to encourage farmers have also contributed in boosting agricultural production.

Pasture shortage was reported in flood affected areas of Jor, Itang, Lare, Jikow, Wontuwa and Akobo during July to September. Since mid September, however, pasture availability has improved in all woredas except Akobo and Wontuwa. Additionally, availability of water for livestock consumption is adequate across the region.

Prices of staple food crops (maize and sorghum) had been continuously rising throughout the region between January and August 2008. With arrival of fresh harvest in August, the trend reversed and prices have since then continued to decline.



BENISHANGUL GUMUZ

Agricultural performance has been good and a normal harvest is expected in many parts of the region. Overall production in the region in 2008 is estimated to be 5.5 percent higher than that of 2007. However, a combination of internal conflicts over scarce resources in parts of Asossa and Kemashi zones deterred normal agricultural activities thus negatively impacting food crop production in the affected woredas. Many farmers were unable to cultivate and plant their farmlands. The few that managed to do so did not have the chance to take care of their crops. As a result the crops were destroyed by weeds and wild animals. This has now contributed to the looming food security situation in Kurmuk, Homosha, Menge, Sherkole and Belojiganfoye woredas of the region.

In addition, income from migratory labor into the Sudan has been severely curtailed due to strict control at the border crossing. Moreover, a joint rapid nutrition assessment undertaken by regional and woreda staff has identified severe malnutrition in children in some of the kebeles and hence the food security situation in the affected woredas is already a serious cause for concern. After analyzing the impact of poor harvests in the conflict afflicted areas and the contributions of traditional coping mechanisms including collection of wild fruit, roots and honey, the assessment mission estimates 35,233 people to be in need of emergency food assistance for the period up to July 2009.

Except for a few isolated areas, the onset and cessation of *meher* rains this year was generally on time in all zones of the region. Distribution of rains was also good throughout the season despite occurrences of flush floods in parts of Sherkole woreda and hailstorms in one kebele of Pawe Special Woreda in the month of August.

Market supply of food grains to Kamashi and Metekel zones is high and normal for the time of the year. This is attributed to favorable harvest from the current agricultural season. Nonetheless, in woredas of Asosa zone where there have been conflicts problem during the year, market supply of cereals is very low and supply of essential food commodities to markets have been inadequate.

DIRE DAWA

Poor *belg* and *meher* season rainfall in 2008 considerably affected the overall crop production especially sorghum and maize although unseasonable rains in October 2008 benefited farmers in providing additional income from the sale of increased chat production. According to the multi-agency needs assessment, approximately 7,644 people are likely to require emergency food assistance for the first half of 2009.

Crop production prospects, this year, are reported to be significantly lower compared to the reference year 2006 (EC 1998/99). Delays in *belg* rains during land preparation and planting of long cycle crops, occurrences of long dry spells, inadequate rains at crops' critical growth stages, pest infestation, insufficient use of fertilizers and improved seeds, and repeated planting of crops such as maize and

sorghum contribute to decreased yields. The current season pre-harvest estimate, therefore, indicates only 42 percent of the reference year. In addition, high prices of staple foods have further exacerbated food security conditions.

Belg rains in the area have been delayed by one month from the usual time and cessation of *meher* rains was early by about two weeks. The amount and distribution of rains during rainy seasons was also below normal. The late onset of *belg* rains affected land preparation and planting of long cycle crops; early withdrawal of *meher* rains affected crops at their vegetative, flowering, fruit setting and maturing stages.

The overall herd size of cattle and camel has slightly increased from the reference year while the number of shoats has decreased because of good market outlet opportunities in the area. No disease outbreaks have been reported and physical conditions of livestock are reportedly normal.

Current prices of staple food have shown slight declines from the previous four months (2008) due to increased green harvest and supply of commercial food grains into the main markets by cooperatives and on-going relief food distributions. However, current prices of staple food remain considerably high from that of same time last year. The price of Sorghum in September 2008 was 750 birr/quintal which is almost double from the price in September 2007 - 380 birr/quintal. Nevertheless, price of livestock reportedly remained stable in the past consecutive years.

HARERI

In Harai Region, the income from crop and livestock sales was very high as compared to the reference year (2006) due to high prices, assisting most households to maximize their income and increase food purchases to fill their food gap without requiring external assistance. Despite the late onset, seasonal rainfall was adequate in amount and distribution, slightly affecting crop production.

Reduced yields of staple crops (sorghum and maize) and high staple food prices will nevertheless affect food security in the seven Kebeles in Sofi woreda. However, the region is relatively better off due to the proximity of major markets and urban centers allowing other income generating activities such as petty trade. This implies that the income from off farm activities are believed to have a capacity to cover the production losses.

There is a chronic water shortage in eight kebeles of eastern part of the region, particularly in January and February. A usual coping mechanism is to travel to the Erer valley in search of water. This year the unseasonal rains have replenished water sources so this migration is not necessary. Nonetheless, the current water situation is estimated to be adequate until the next rainy season, other than the areas with chronic water shortages. However, due to the small size of the region, even these areas have access to water due to proximity to urban centers.



UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS

In Addis Ababa

February 03,	Education Cluster Meeting, MoE, 10:00a.m., (Open to all)
February 04,	Health & Nutrition Sectoral Task Force Meeting, FMOH, 02:00p.m., (Open to all)
February 05, 19	Humanitarian Coordination Meeting, UNDP, 10:00a.m., (Invitations only)
February 6, 13, 20, 27	UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30a.m (Open to all)
February 12 & 13	National Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop, UN Conference Center (Invitation only)
February 11, 18, 25	UN Cluster Leads Meeting, UN OCHA, 09:00a.m, (Invitations only) (TBC) HRF, Review Board Meeting, UN OCHA, 03:00p.m., (Invitations only)
February 12, 26	Somali Region Operational NGOs Meeting, UNDP, 10:00a.m., (Invitations only) (TBC)

In the Regions – Somali, SNNPR, Amhara & Afar

February 3, 17	Regional UN agencies forum, UNHCR, 04:00p.m, Jijiga (Open to all)
February 4, 11, 18, 25	Area Security Meeting, UNHCR, 04:00p.m, Jijiga (Open to all)
February 05	Regional Agricultural task force, RAB, 09:00a.m , Jijiga (Open to all)
February 07	Degehabur Humanitarian Coordination Meeting, Degehabur, (Open to all)
February 09	Regional Health & Nutrition task force, RHB, 09:00a.m, Jijiga (Open to all)
February 09	Regional WASH task force, RWB, 03:00p.m, Jijiga (Open to all)
February 10	Humanitarian Coordination Meeting, President Office, Jijiga, 09:00a.m (Open to all)
February 10	Regional Education forum, Women Affair Bureau, 09:00a.m, Jijiga (Open to all)
February 16,	Coordination Meeting for Berana Zone, Zonal DPP Office, Yabello, 09:00a.m (Open to all)