



FOCUS ON Ethiopia

JANUARY 2008



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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, as well as focusing on particular issues of interest. Send comments, suggestions and contributions to ocha-eth@un.org

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

OROMIYA

The food security situation in the lowland woredas of Borena, Guji, Bale, Arsi, East and West Hararghe zones is of concern due to the poor performance of *genna* and *hageya* rains. Poor households in these woredas have resorted to coping mechanisms such as reduction of daily meals and

slaughtering of milking cows. Meanwhile, good *meher* harvest is anticipated in the highland and midland woredas of the region.

Serious shortage of water and pasture is reported in Dillo, Miyo, Dire, Dhas, Moyale, Teltele, Arero, and Yabello woredas in Borena zone; Liben woreda in Guji zone and 56 kebeles in various woredas of East Hararghe zone. The situation is severe in Dire woreda. Most of the ponds and cisterns have dried and the yield of traditional *w/a*/wells has decreased. Most hand pumps, motorized units, and boreholes require immediate rehabilitation. Pasture reserves in Borena zone are over grazed, resulting in unusual livestock migration. Influx of herds from neighboring Somali Region aggravated the situation. Some schools are reportedly closed and dropout rates have increased, according to a joint assessment undertaken in early January 2008. In addition, locust infestation in Bale, Borena and East Hararghe zones is damaging vegetation.

As a result the physical condition of livestock deteriorated and deaths of cattle is being reported. CARE reported deaths of livestock including calves and milking cows in Dire woreda.



A rapid emergency assessment conducted by the Oromiya Pastoralist Commission in Borena zone identified priority intervention requirements including animal feed, vaccination and treatment, rehabilitation of water points and water tankering. Similar requirements have been classified by the Regional Emergency Coordination Meeting and the zonal Borena Emergency Meetings on 22 January and 6 February.

The situation is most severe in Miyo and Dire woredas, particularly in the most affected four kebeles of Haralo, Melbana, Bokuluboma and Gorile. The government and humanitarian partners including FAO, SC-US, CARE and the Pastoralist Commission, Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Livestock and Meat Marketing Project (SPS LMM) are planning to initiate a commercial de-stocking programme as well as animal feed and veterinary interventions.



Responses have started in some of the affected woredas of Borena zone. Water rationing has commenced in Miyo and Dillo woredas; the intervention however, should be scaled up. The Food Security Bureau has requested immediate food aid allocation for 88,000 emergency beneficiaries identified in PSNP woredas to be addressed by safety net contingency fund. The beneficiaries are identified by the *meher* assessment, in addition to the regular 124,000 PSNP beneficiaries in the zone. DPPA also allocated CSB for PSNP beneficiaries. Additionally, CARE is providing animal feed for approximately 4,200 head of cattle in Dire, Miyo, Dhas woredas. It also plans to conduct water rationing interventions in the zone.

Preliminary results of a nutritional survey conducted by the regional and the zonal health bureaus in Miyo and Moyale woredas of Borena zone in early January indicates a 7.5 percent GAM and 1 percent SAM in Miyo woreda and a 0.5 GAM and 0.6 SAM for Moyale woreda. The finding of the survey is being finalized. The situation should be closely monitored as traditionally Borenas' prioritize feeding their children during emergencies.

More than 650 suspected cases of measles were reported in Guji zone at the beginning of February. Surveillance and preventive measures are strengthened; while proper case management is on-going. Another measles outbreak in early January in West Shoa, North Shoa, Bale, Illubabur, East Wollega, and West Hararghe zones has been controlled. Meanwhile, health surveillance data from the FMOH indicate that the region has not reported new AWD cases for more than a month.

Although supplies of staple food to markets were normal in most parts, high prices of both cereals and livestock continue to be reported across the region. In Borena zone, a significant increase in the price of staple foods has largely reduced the purchasing power of pastoralists. The price of maize in Moyale and Dire woredas has increased from 190 birr per quintal in December 2007 to 250 - 290 per quintal in January 2008. On the other hand the price of Ox has reduced from 1,300 birr to 900 birr in January. Demand and prices of livestock in Medawelabu, Dawe Serer and Dawe Kitchen woredas of Bale zone have been depressed as the traditional livestock market with Somali Region has been blocked due to clan tensions.

Meanwhile, Kenyan refugees in Dire woreda are receiving relief rations, however lack of water and health services continue to be of concern. Although, the IDPs in Harolimu woreda of East Wollega zone that were displaced by clan conflict last year, returned to their woreda of origin, no measures were undertaken to effectively rehabilitate them.

SOMALI

The food security situation in Somali Region remains to be of concern particularly in the five zones under military operation - Degehabur, Fik, Korahe, Warder and Gode- as the dry season, *jilaal*, progresses. Shortages of water and pasture continue to be reported. The Regional Government is preparing a six month emergency preparedness and response plan.

Poor water availability and pasture depletion have resulted in abnormal livestock cross zone migration particularly in Warder, Degehabur and in parts of Fik, Gode, Afder and Liben. Livestock body conditions have deteriorated and milk production has reduced.

Serious water shortage is reported in the chronically water insecure areas of Geladin, Danot and Boh woredas in Warder zone; Bare and Goro Baqaqsa woredas in Afder zone and Filtu woreda in Liben zone and Shilabo woreda in Korahe zone. The Regional Water Bureau, DPPB and UNICEF are setting priorities for water intervention in the *deyr* receiving zones. The Regional DPPB has submitted a proposal for UNICEF to support water tankering in hotspot areas of Warder, Liben, Gode, Afder, Fik and Korahe zones.



In response to recommendations made by the DPPB Flash Update on 5 January, the DPPA-led multi-agency seasonal assessment and a Regional Bureau of Water Resources assessment, the region is preparing a six month multi-sectoral response plan for drought. The plan aims to cover life-saving interventions in the areas of water and sanitation, health and nutrition, agriculture, non-food items and emergency responses to ensure that education services remain available. Food needs are anticipated to be met through existing funds. The Response Plan was developed by an inter-departmental taskforce established by the Office of the Regional President in January and comprises relevant line ministries as well as DPPB and DPPA. The plan is expected to be issued in mid-February.

Access in the five zones under military operation is still a challenge with increasing check points on major routes. Although slight improvements have been noted on the commercial restrictions particularly on cereals, market access for pastoral and agro-pastoral populations living in Gode, Korahe, Degehabur, Warder, and Kebridehar zones continues to be limited.

Meanwhile, Sectoral responses in the five military operation zones are ongoing. As of 29 January, out of the 26,600MT emergency food allocated to date for three months, nearly 21,200 MT has been dispatched to the five priority zones. To date, over 14,000 MT of relief food commodities have reached the FDPs, of which 73 percent has been distributed to beneficiaries. WFP monitoring teams have visited 87 out of 186 FDPs. EOS screening was completed in 13 project woredas of Gursum, Harshin, Aisha, Dembel, Bokh, Galadin, Gashamo, Adale, Moyale, Doloodo, West Imi, Cherati, and Bare. The exercise provided 1,337,088 MT of supplementary food to 48,000 malnourished children under five, pregnant and nursing women.

In addition, UNFPA has deployed a Sexual and Reproductive Health Coordinator. Based in Jijiga, the coordinator will work to ensure a coordinated response on issues of maternal health, Sexually Based Gender Violence and HIV-related issues. WHO has also re-deployed five surveillance officers and two consultants. FAO and the Regional Bureau of Agriculture are undertaking preparations to conduct needs assessment in the five military operation zones in early March.

Furthermore, out of the total fourteen UNICEF supported mobile health teams deployed in the region, the last nine began operations in Danot, Aware, Degehamedow, Segeg, Duhun, Denan, Debeweyin, Shilabo and Kebridehar woredas during the first half of January. The teams have been briefed and provided with measles outbreak investigation and management guidelines to treat and trace additional cases. The mobile teams plan to provide treatment for approximately 78,750 people in the region during their three-month stay. In addition to distributing plumpy'nut for malnourished children and providing basic medical care, the teams will provide water and sanitation, first aid, health education and counseling

services. In order to avoid overlapping and duplication of activities by the newly deployed teams and other on-going programs, the teams will focus on areas where there are no health facilities. A review meeting for the first five teams has been conducted in Gode zone in the first week of February. The two month report for these teams is under consolidation and analysis.

According to WHO, out of a suspected forty five measles cases in Kelafo, four have now been confirmed by laboratory tests. Other cases were reported in Geladin, where one was confirmed. Most of the cases are reported among children under five, who were not vaccinated. Limited vaccination coverage and poor surveillance systems have reportedly contributed to the outbreak.

The regional health bureau, UNICEF and WHO have started conducting a mass campaign to immunize approximately 783,700 children of 6 to 59 months against measles. The recent increase of confirmed measles cases and the very low immunization coverage have increased the urgency of such a campaign to prevent further outbreak. The campaign has started on 6 February in a first phase of 32 woredas and the remaining woredas are planned to follow soon. All the required supplies are in stock and UNICEF supports the financial and other logistic needs of the campaign. A major mobilization of all partners operational in the region has also been made to enhance the effectiveness and quality of the campaign. Polio vaccination and Vitamin A supplementation at fixed outreach sites are also integrated into the campaign. Training of facilitators (TOT) was also conducted in Jijiga for 25 regional health staff.



According to WHO and UNICEF, two suspected cases of meningitis were reported from Karamara hospital in Jijiga town. Meanwhile, FMoH reported that there were no reports new AWD cases in the region for over a month.



Restocking of emergency drug kits, medical supplies, nutrition products and water treatment chemicals have continued and to date 38 out of 41 health facilities have been covered by UNICEF. Additional two health facilities were stocked in Degehabur woreda.

Locust is leaving the region as conditions were not conducive to its development. Significant damage however, has occurred particularly to pasture and irrigated fields, although the impact has not been quantified. Locust swarms could re-emerge once the light rains start.

There is an overall increase in prices of commodities, particularly on food. Among other factors the increase is attributed to poor market supply and little or no harvest in agro pastoral and riverine areas in the southern zones. The price of livestock, on the other hand, continued to decline due to poor livestock body condition and decrease in demand.

Meanwhile, humanitarian Coordination Fora are being held at Jijiga and Kebridehar. Sectoral coordination meetings are also ongoing in Jijiga, Kebridehar and Gode.

TIGRAY

The food security situation in Tigray Region continues to be normal during January. There were no reports of unusual coping mechanisms or incidences of malnutrition. In Zalanbessa town however, close monitoring is required due to early depletion of relief food, according to WFP's monthly field update.

The *belg* rains have started in mid-January in some *belg* producing woredas of Southern Zone. The rains were however, interrupted in the third week of the month in Raya Azebo, Alamata, and Ofra woredas. Land preparation has started in Raya Azobo, Alamata, and Ofra woredas.



During the month, there was no major human health problem reported. The physical condition of livestock was also normal in all woredas of the region. Furthermore, supply of both cereals and livestock was normal in all markets.

Meanwhile, IRC is conducting awareness raising campaigns on HIV/AIDS in Eritrean refugee camp.

AMHARA

The overall food security situation is normal following good meher harvests, apart from pocket areas that were affected by weather related shocks that require emergency food assistance. Some of these requirements are anticipated to be addressed through PSNP contingency resource.

Meher crop harvesting has been completed in most areas. Availability of pasture and water was normal for the time of the year. The overall livestock body condition was also rated good.

No new cases of AWD have been reported during the month and prevalence of the disease is reportedly declining. Incidence of malaria has also declined due to proper preventive and control measures undertaken.

Some reduction in prices of grains has been observed following the recent harvest. The reduction, however, does not match with normal seasonal patterns

Meanwhile, ENCU is planning to undertake nutrition baseline survey in the region shortly. A total of 22 zonal and regional representatives have been trained in the use of emergency nutrition assessment software.

SNNP

The overall food security situation was normal during the month with good meher harvest. Locust infestation in South Omo zone and Konso Special woreda, however, poses an enormous threat to vegetation. Suspected cases of meningitis and measles were also reported during the month.

The *belg* rains have not commenced in most areas apart from Sheka, Kefa and Benchi Maji zones, which reportedly received light to moderate rainfall for six to eight days of the month. Few days of light showers were also reported in Hadiya, Kembata, Gedeo, Welaiata, Gamo Gofa, Dawro, Sidama zones, and Konso special woreda.

Harvesting of *meher* crops have been completed in most areas apart from the highland areas of Sidama, Skeka zones and Derashe special woreda. Reports indicate that moisture stresses in December has hampered the normal development of Sweet Potato, which is a main staple food in some parts of the region. Meanwhile, plantation of *belg* crops has not yet started due to delay in *belg* rains in most places apart from Dugna Fango woreda of Gamo Gofa zone where plantation of maize is started.

Pasture and water availability were good although there have been reports of slight pasture shortage in Gibe, Shashego, Soro weredas of Hadiya zone and lowland woredas of Gamo Gofa zone.

Suspected cases of meningitis were reported from Kambata Tembaro and Hadiya zones. A total of six cases with one death were reported in Adorro Tunttoo, Kadida, Kaccha Birra, and Tenbarro woredas in Kambata Tembaro



zone. In Hadiya zone, five cases and one death were reported from Hadiya hospital. Laboratory investigation is underway to confirm the reports. The FMOH in collaboration with partners has developed a preparedness and response plan seeking for US\$ 28 million. Cases of measles were also reported from Sheko, Sidama, Hadiya and Gurage zones. Furthermore Anthrax has reportedly killed one person and four cattle in Gurage zone. In order to protect the spread of the disease, vaccination has been provided to 275 people. The nutritional situation remained stable across the region.

Desert locust swarms that migrated from Somali Region have affected South Omo zone and Konso Special Woreda. The current locust situation in Ethiopia is the worst the country has experienced for over 45 years, according to regional FAO experts. While many of the affected areas are thought to be too dry for locust breeding and development, pasture and crops are still vulnerable. Crop producing areas of South Omo zone where recent rains could be conducive to locust development are of particular concern. The Desert Locust Control Organisation for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) has aircraft on standby for pesticide spraying in affected areas. One aircraft has begun aerial campaigns using the Konso airstrip. The effort is joined by ground control interventions carried out by MoARD teams in the Konso zone.

An outbreak of black leg livestock disease has been reported in Mareka and Gena Bosa woredas of Dawro zone; while, Food and Mouth Disease outbreaks continued to be reported in Surma woreda, Bench Maji zone.

Compared to the previous month, there is slight increase in the prices of main staple crops in some woredas of Kemabat Tembaro, Gamo Gofa, Sidama and Gurage, and Alaba special woreda. The price of teff is increased by 45-50 birr per quintal in Gurage zone. The price of livestock, however, has decreased in some woredas of Gamu Gofa, Dawro, and Konso markets.

AFAR

The overflow of Awash River during the month reportedly affected approximately 495 people. On the other hand, there are threats of critical water shortage in Elidaar woreda in Zone 1 due to failure of *Dada's/Debeba* rains.

The seasonal *Dada's/Debeba* rains started late in almost all zones. The coverage, however, was relatively better in Zone 2 and 4. Few days of light rains received in these areas slightly improved browse and pasture availability. In Elidaar, Dubti and Aysaita woredas of Zone 1, however, no rains were reported during the month. Critical water shortage was reported in Gewah, Buldugum, Paradizo, Diciotto and Elidaar 01 kebeles of Elidaar woreda due to the depletion of water reservoirs and ponds. Few elas (shallow water wells) near Elidaar kebele are currently the only water sources for both human and livestock consumption. The existing water reservoirs are sufficient only for a month period of time, unless replenished by the

upcoming *sugum* rains. Emergency water interventions including water trucking are, therefore, of highest priority. There is also high risk of water borne diseases if the situation remains unchanged.

Meanwhile, unexpected rise in the level of Awash River on January 20 damaged houses along the river banks including farm land in Aysaita woreda. The lower part of the Awash River banks were filled with silt and mud that changed the direction of the river resulting in the overflow. Findings of the assessment conducted by a team comprised of DPPA, DPPFSB and SC-UK indicate that approximately 495 people have been affected in Aysaita woreda. The floods rendered ten households homeless and inundated two hectares of tomato plantation and 20 ha of matured stage maize in Kerebuda Kebele. Reports indicate that these areas are still covered by flood water creating risks of a malaria outbreak. The regional DPPFSB has provided shelter and household items for the affected people. Furthermore, DPPA has transported 74 quintals of wheat, 8 quintals of supplementary food and 2 quintals of oil.

Among the major recommendation of the team is an urgent need of for cleaning of silt and mud that filled canals to prevent occurrence of another flooding before the upcoming short rain. There is also a need to prepare a flood contingency plan for woredas in the lower Awash River. Large numbers of livestock are also reportedly moving to Aysaita woreda in search of pasture. Pasture and browse availability has improved in Dubti, Afambo and Aysaita woredas in Zone 2 and 4 with favourable rainfall performance. On the other hand, in Zone 3, both pasture and browse availability has been declining since December. According to the Regional DPPB/SC-UK January report, the situation is of particular concern in Elidaar woreda with below normal status – between poor and drought. There are reports of livestock movement towards cotton plantation farms in search of pasture and feed.



The overall human health condition was normal during the month with reports of stabilization of Acute Watery Diarrhoea in most previously affected areas. The Regional DPPB/SC-UK Early Warning report for the month of January indicates that new cases were, however, reported

from Chifra and Awash Fentale woredas during the month.



According to Afar Region Health Bureau, three cases in Chifra woreda and one case in Awash Fentale woredas were reported during the second week of January 2007. In 3rd and 4th week of January, Zero active case reported from the affected woredas. Meanwhile, endemic diseases such as malaria and respiratory infections were reported among under five children in Mille and Elwuha Kebeles. APDA in its latest report indicated that it has completed three rounds of EPI vaccination including polio, measles and hepatitis B in Elidaar woreda and begun the first round in Sifra.

A stable Terms of Trade (ToT) was reported for pastoralists during the month. The overall cereal price has also been stable in most markets. There is, however, an increase in the price of maize in Aysaita woreda - 29.4 percent higher compared to same period last year. The increase in price is attributed to the nationwide inflation, which has reportedly created 44 percent reduction on pastoralist terms of trade (TOT).

POOR RAIN FORECASTS SUGGEST INCREASED FOOD INSECURITY: FEWSNET

FEWSNET in its latest food security alert (11 February) indicates the need for the Government and humanitarian partners to prepare a contingency plan following the National Meteorology Agency's below normal forecast of the March to May rains in the eastern half of the country. The alert notes that the plan should include market interventions for livestock and water point maintenance. In addition it highlights the need for timely provision of identified food aid requirements with improved targeting and monitoring, particularly in pastoral areas and preparations for possible nutrition interventions. Provision of short-cycle drought resistant seed for *belg* crop dependent areas is also identified as a priority. The rains between March and May are critical in southeastern pastoral areas of Somali Region and neighboring lowlands of Borena, Guji, and Bale zones of Oromiya Region, where households are already highly food insecure due to the poor performance of the 2007 *gu* and *deyr* (October to December) rains. Poor or failed *gu* rains in 2008 will likely lead to high food insecurity in these areas, unless immediate interventions are implemented. For more information contact: Ethiopia@few.net

NEW NATIONAL NUTRITION STRATEGY LAUNCHED

The Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) launched a new National Nutrition Strategy during the first week of February. The new strategy clearly defines the multi-sectoral nature of malnutrition. It is a guiding document for ensuring nutrition security via linkages of various sectors including health, water and sanitation, agriculture and education. The strategy has a wide scope that includes promoting child growth, essential nutrition actions, maternal caring practices and working on knowledge, attitude, and practice for improved nutrition. In addition it encompasses various nutrition related intervention including HIV/AIDS community based nutrition, emergencies, food standards enforcement as well as

water and sanitation. The success of the strategy largely depends on effective participation and collaboration of government bodies, the community and partners. For more information contact: moh@ethionet.et

UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS

In Addis Ababa

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| February 15, 22, 29 | UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30a.m (Open to all) |
| February 19 | SDMT, Strategic Disaster Management Team Meeting, venue & time, To be Confirmed (UN-Internal only) |
| | WASH Emergency Task Force Meeting, MoWR, To be Confirmed 10:00a.m (Open to all) |
| February 20 | Health Partners Forum Meeting, WHO Conf. Room, To be Confirmed , 02:00p.m. (Open to all) |
| | HRF Review Board meeting, UN OCHA, 03:00p.m (UN-Internal Only) |

In the Region - Somali

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| February 18, 25 | Water and Sanitation (WASH) Meeting, UN Conference room, 09:00a.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| | Agriculture Task Force Meeting, DPPB, 10:00a.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| February 19 | Humanitarian Coordination Meeting, WFP Conference Room, 09:00a.m, Gode (Open to all) |
| | Area Security Meeting, WFP Conference Room, 04:00p.m, Gode (Open to all) |
| February 20, 27 | Food Distribution & Monitoring Committee Meeting, UN Compound, 09:00a.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| | Health & Nutrition Meeting, Hospital, 03:00p.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| | Area Security Meeting, UN Compound, 04:00p.m., Jijiga (Open to all) |
| | Area Security Meeting, UN Compound, 05:00p.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| February 21, 28 | Humanitarian Co-ordination Forum Meeting, UN Conference room, 09:00a.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| February 25 | Health & Nutrition Task Force Meeting, 09:30a.m, Jijiga, RHB |
| | Water and Sanitation (WASH) Meeting, 02:30p.m, Jijiga, RWRDB |
| February 27 | Humanitarian Co-ordination Forum Meeting, 09:30a.m, Jijiga, BoLSA, (Open to all) |