



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)
SOMALIA

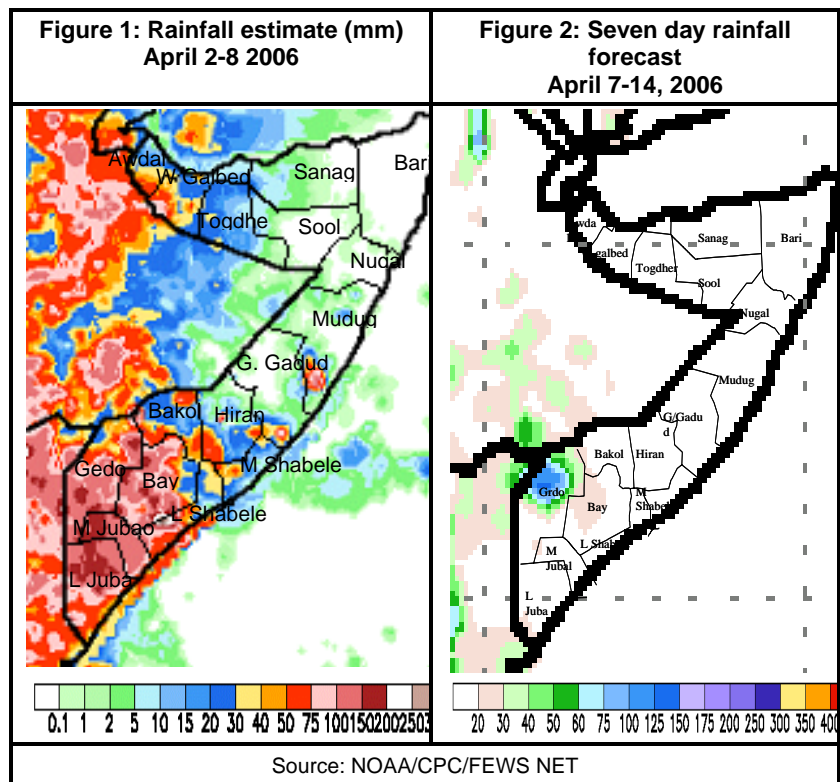
SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE OVERVIEW
5 – 19 April 2006
Number 8

Update

Rains : The primary *Gu* rainy season commenced in the first week of April. The south received good rains over a period of roughly three days, (Gedo, Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bay and parts of Lower Shabelle) with the exception of parts of Hiran Region and Adale and Warsheikh districts in Middle Shabelle. (Somalia Rain Watch or look at www.fews.net).

Rains have provided some short-term relief; replenished water sources and prompted some migrations of pastoralists from riverine and farming areas into the traditional grazing areas in the hinterland (Somalia Rain Watch).

However, reports from the field suggest that the spatial distribution of rain has been scattered and some districts of the south have remained dry. These areas will be highlighted in future Somalia Humanitarian Response Overviews.



The upper catchments of Juba and Shabelle rivers in the Ethiopian highlands have also received heavy rain, which has increased river levels – although river levels still remain relatively low for this time of year in Somalia. The Somali/Kenyan border also received good rains.

Satellite images indicate and field reports confirm that Awdal and Hawd of Hargiesia have received a moderate amount of rainfall over 7-14 April. **However, Togdheer, Sanaag, Sool, Bari, Nugal, Mudug and Galgaduud regions received only light showers, which did not have a major impact in terms of water availability for people or livestock.** Berkads in the Hawd and Sool plateau livelihood zones are reported to be dry, and water trucking continues in Burao, Odweine and Ainabo districts. **Although rains have been adequate so far, it is too early to determine the overall performance of the *Gu* season. The Food Security Analysis Unit Somalia will make a statement on the overall food security and livelihood outlook in late May 2006.**

Security/Access : Humanitarian access remains critical to the 2.1 million most vulnerable population in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection. On 10 April, a 72 lorry WFP convoy heading out for drought stricken areas outside Baidoa was halted by a roadblock. Two militiamen were killed and four guards were

wounded in subsequent attempt to remove the roadblock. An MP from the interim parliament tried to negotiate with the gunmen but was himself injured. The convoy finally managed to return to Baidoa with all its cargo of maize, beans, cooking oil and porridge intact. The distribution resumed on 12 April once the situation calmed down.

At the end of March, clashes erupted between warlords and extremists in the capital, Mogadishu. This represents some of the worst violence in almost a decade and needs close monitoring. If it continues to escalate and spread it will have serious implications and likely cause a massive population movement away from the city. It will also affect the ability of aid agencies to provide protection to civilians as well as providing key humanitarian relief to drought stricken areas in the south.

Over the last nine months, sea piracy along the Somali coastline has impacted on humanitarian supply pipelines into southern Somalia. Because of hijackings, WFP has also had to transport food aid into Somalia overland through Kenya. In terms of security, the recent move by Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi to grant permission to allow US Navy vessels to patrol Somali waters to fight piracy is welcome.

WFP reported that an increased number of roadblocks, as well as heavy rains has slowed down the delivery of their food relief in some areas of southern Somalia. As a contingency measure and in case airdrops are needed in future, WFP have also identified relevant field locations and are also carrying out training of staff.

Juba valley (southern Somalia) remains an area with critical humanitarian needs but insecurity has made it difficult for UN agencies and INGOs to operate in the area. A recent positive development is that Horn Relief and Oxfam GB have proposed to initiate a cash for work project in the area to help improve accessibility to food and help relieve the debt burden of households.

Ongoing response

- **Protection**

Since the start of the rains, population movements generally reflect the expected seasonal patterns but also reflect the stress that the Somali people are currently experiencing. As mentioned on page one there has been a de-concentration of pastoralist families in the riverine areas as those who still have animals move in search of grazing land and water. This has led to a logically scattered trek back into the traditional grazing lands of the hinterland where some rain has fallen. Those non-pastoralists or those who have lost most or all of their livestock and other assets remain in the urban areas, both in search of alternative opportunities or humanitarian aid.



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The majority of the displacement recorded within the first two weeks of April related to whole families, pastoralist as well as IDPs, with both drought and conflict as the primary reasons for the movement. 2,271 pastoralist families moved to Belet Hawa town and surrounding areas, north and south. Furthermore, 210 pastoralist families were reported to have arrived in the settlement of Kulanjareer, and 200 pastoralist families settled on the northern outskirts of Wajid town.

IDP movement was also recorded towards the outskirts of Luuq town and Wajid town (2500 IDP families). In addition, 1,360 families were reported to have arrived in Qansaxdhere town.

Protection needs remain greatest amongst those already vulnerable, especially protracted IDP communities, who are increasingly burdened by the new displacements ongoing. In addition, population movement tracking and analysis while headed by the Protection Cluster is a cross-cluster activity, in which displacements and protection information are being passed to the key clusters i.e., food, water and health, in order that humanitarian assistance can be targeted toward the most vulnerable. This is being done with the full knowledge that aid is itself a pull factor that can affect the normal movement patterns and coping mechanisms of the Somali people.

- **Food security**

5,000 Mt of food is currently being distributed in Baidoa and Dinsor districts while WFP is currently planning their second round of drought relief food distribution. Since late February a total of 11,800 Mt of food have been distributed to 730,000 beneficiaries in south Somalia and a total of 1,700 Mt of food has been distributed in the north. WFP is proposing to do a rapid assessment in the north east - which has still received no rain - and where some districts are reportedly suffering from chronic drought conditions.

CARE has recently completed food distributions in Gedo and has begun water trucking and borehole rehabilitation in affected areas of El Waq. Similar activities are in the pipeline for Dolow and Belet Hawa; the next food distribution in Gedo is scheduled to take place at the end of April.

ICRC interventions continue in Gedo, Lower Juba, Bakol, Lower Shabelle, Mudug and Galgadud involving food distributions (and the rehabilitation of strategic water-points, veterinary interventions and seed distributions).

- **Agriculture and livelihoods**

The Gu planting season is under preparation. Major actors include ICRC and FAO covering respectively 23,000 and 24,600 households. With resources available, it is estimated that close to 50% of the estimated needy families will receive planting material (sorghum and cowpea seeds).

FAO is procuring some 492 Mt of sorghum and cowpea from Wajid (21 Mt), Baidoa (255 Mt), Belet Weyne (71 Mt), Afmadow (11,6 Mt), Garbaharey (18,4 Mt), Bardheere (107 Mt) and Dolow (8 Mt). Distribution was concluded in Wajid (FAO/ACF). Seeds are being bagged in Belet Weyne for distribution in Belet Weyne (FAO/DRC) and Balcad (FAO/Agrosphere), while seed testing is on-going at both Nairobi and field level, for the samples received from the other locations.

Livestock and pastoralist activities continue to focus on de-stocking, animal health and water trucking.

- **Health**

In the last two weeks UNICEF and WHO reviewed their plans to implement key drought response activities including improving stocks of emergency drugs and supplies, strengthening surveillance and early warning, expanding of health care through mobile clinics, and reinforcing ongoing immunization activities.

In support of the drought response, WHO is planning on implementing an intensive course on Communicable Disease Control and Emergency Response in Merka, Lower Shabelle and aimed at MOH, UN, Health coordinators, NGOs and Health Facility representatives and also the hiring of a nutritionist for a 2 month period to carry out specific drought related activities.

As malaria is endemic in the south, a recent shipment of 60,000 Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN) will be distributed to vulnerable groups in drought stricken areas.

- **Nutrition**

Gedo Nutrition Assessment: The preliminary findings of the Gedo Region nutrition assessment conducted in late March (excluding Bardera Town) indicate global acute malnutrition rate of 23.8 % and severe acute malnutrition rate of 3.7%. This is way above internationally accepted cut off rates of 15% and indicates a critical nutrition situation. The mortality rates indicate an alert situation. Crude and under five mortality rates were 1.04/ 10000/day and 2.46/10000/day respectively. The Gedo population relies on both international and informal assistance, and there is need for increased assistance to avert increased mortality. A high prevalence of communicable

disease and poor diet was noted. Detailed analysis of the findings is currently on-going – for more information please see www.fsausomali.org.

A nutrition assessment conducted in January 2006 in Qansaxdheere (Bay Region) indicates a critical nutrition situation (global acute malnutrition of 19.4%). Currently a collaboration effort between MSF-CH and Somali Red Crescent Society (SCRS) facilitates referral of severely malnourished children from Qansadheere District to MSF-CH managed Dinsor Therapeutic Feeding Centre.

The ACF managed Wajid Therapeutic Feeding Centre opened in March 2006 and 109 severely malnourished children were admitted in same month. These are mainly from the IDP camps, Wajid town and the surrounding villages. There were about 90 in-charges in the Wajid Therapeutic Feeding Centre (as of 18th April 2006).

- **Water and Sanitation**

Despite the arrival of rain in the most drought affected areas of southern Somalia, water trucking remains critical. It takes time for shallow wells to be filled and the pressure on boreholes to ease. Water trucking is taking place in over 40 locations in Bay, Bakol, Gedo and Middle Juba. Chlorination activities continue to be conducted to prevent the spread of communicable/waterborne diseases such as malaria, cholera and diarrhea. Rehabilitation of boreholes and deepening of shadow wells are ongoing in the aforementioned four regions as is the de-silting of 50 dams. These activities will impact not only on the short-term drought response but Somalia's longer-term capacity

to cope with drought conditions. Key constraints to project implementation have been the limited availability of permanent water sources making some water trucking operations difficult and the general security situations in the areas.

- **Education**

Somalia has one of the lowest school attendance rates in the world – and reports on the ground suggest that the drought has caused this attendance rate to drop even further as families move in search of food, pasture and water. UNICEF has been conducting a school attendance survey in Bay, Bakol, Middle Juba and Lower Juba and Gedo (during month of April). Consolidated results of this assessment (looking at impact of drought on school attendance in February) will be released in early May. In efforts to restore school attendance rates, UNICEF and WFP have finalized a Pilot Emergency School Feeding project, which is part of the education drought strategic response. Implementation will start in May through World Concern for Lower Juba, World Vision and Save the Children UK for Middle Juba, Intersos for Bay, Norwegian Church Aid for Gedo and ADRA for Hiran region.

The education cluster recognizes there have been some gaps in terms of drought response mostly due to funding and humanitarian access constraints. However, these have been overcome and in an effort to improve school attendance rates, UNICEF and the NGOs involved in the education sector have been discussing and finalizing Project Agreements with NGOs (working on the ground – as outlined in the paragraph above) with the aim of pushing up school attendance to pre-drought levels through school feeding, school tents, distribution of educational materials and incentives to teachers.