



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

SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE OVERVIEW

19 April – 5 May 2006

Number 9

Update

As a result of rainfall in southern Somalia at the end of April and the first week of May the risk of moderate famine in this region is over and a worse case scenario has been averted. The rains have contributed to alleviating the current water crisis as well as helping in the start of the recovery of rangelands.

It has also been noted that the resilience of the Somali population and the humanitarian response by the international community has helped to avoid a major catastrophe.

- ***As the Gu rain season draws to a close, FSAU plans to release a statement at the end of May on the impact of the Gu season on Food Security/Livelihoods.***
- ***Areas of Northeast and Central Somalia Lack Rainfall*** : These areas require careful monitoring since these regions only started to recover from a four-year drought period towards the end of last year (the drought peaked in April 2004). In the past week there have been reports of rain but it is too early to know whether it has been sufficient or not.
- ***Torrential rainfall at the beginning of May in southern Somalia has seriously affected humanitarian operations and access, not only the delivery of food*** : Organizations in Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba, Middle Shabelle and Hiran are having great difficulty reaching outlying areas. The lack of access poses serious security concerns as many organisations now have to rely on air support for evacuation purposes.
- ***The heavy rain has caused localized flooding in Buuale, Jilib and Jamame and caused some damage to households in Jalalaqsi (Hiran), Jowhar (Middle Shabelle) and Burao (Togdheer).*** If the torrential rain continues (and in particular in the Ethiopian highlands) the Juba and Shabelle river levels could rapidly rise causing flooding in the riverine areas of southern Somalia. Currently, however, river levels remain 2-3 metres below 'bank full'. Inter-agency flood meetings were held in Jowhar on 30 April and 3 May to discuss contingency flood plans. It was expressed there is a need for practical assistance such as bulldozers and sandbags to reinforce riverbanks as well as for more advocacy at a local level on flood preparedness.
- ***While access, insecurity, low operational capacity, delayed funding and now heavy rainfall have proved challenges to meeting the humanitarian needs - particularly in south and central Somalia – there have been some recent positive developments.*** These include Horn Relief/Oxfam starting cash for work project in Gedo and Lower Juba and Save The Children looking to implement a project in Sakow, where there has been no international NGO presence for the past 10 years. The German NGO, Humedica, is currently assessing needs in Gedo where they plan to begin a health programme shortly. While Christian Aid is making plans to extend their coverage into Gedo and Middle or Lower Juba.
- ***Mogadishu*** remains tense after a series of clashes between the Union of Islamic Courts and the Restoration of Peace and Counter Terrorism Alliance. Cases of assassinations, roadblocks, militia clashes, mobile robbery and kidnapping are on the increase in the city. The protection cluster is leading contingency plans for the humanitarian response if the current crisis breaks out into serious conflict affecting the city's citizens. Meanwhile reports from the city also indicate that civil society in Mogadishu has mobilized to advocate amongst the warring factions to end the fighting as this is not what the civilians of Mogadishu want.

- **Protection**

The cluster continues to work on population tracking and protection monitoring. The cluster reports that since the rains began - displaced pastoralists in southern Somalia are moving back to their rural areas. In Mogadishu there have also been intra-city population movements occurring (away from areas where the two rival groups are expected to clash) while those who can move out of the city appear to be making preparations for departure. A plan is being drawn up to advocate to Mogadishu's authorities and leaders on humanitarian principles and protection (during conflict) especially for the rights of the most vulnerable populations living in the city. Meanwhile, workshops for local partners on Protection have taken place in Garowe, Merka and Hargeisa. The main challenges within the cluster have been obtaining a regular information flow from Somalia into Nairobi and in Mogadishu, providing a framework of support to local partners once protection needs have been identified.

- **Food**

Food aid is delivered by WFP in partnership with CARE, complimented by ICRC. In their first round of distributions WFP reached around 85% of their planned target of 1 million people. WFP's second round of emergency food distribution has now been finalized and will begin shortly. Cluster food assistance is projected up to the end of July, beyond that it will be reviewed on the basis of field assessments.

ICRC is planning to give out a one time full ration to over 7,000 families in central Somalia (Mudug and Galgadud) and is also looking into the possibility of opening a pipeline from Bossaso port to serve this purpose in future.

The recent heavy rains in parts of the south have made the movement of food commodities difficult, often causing delays when roads become inaccessible. WFP have planned airdrop operations if locations become too inaccessible to reach. Field reports suggest that there are some issues regarding cluster food distributions but meetings have been held with the heads of organizations and OCHA in Nairobi to try and resolve them - and move forward on this on the next round of food distributions. Islamic NGOs have also been distributing food in some areas but since their distribution details are not always known, it is likely there will be occasional overlap.

- **Water and Sanitation**

Partners agreed to stop water trucking activities in the drought affected areas of Bay, Bakol, Gedo and Juba following the onset of Gu rainfall. At the inter-agency coordination meeting in Wajid (30 April), it was also recommended that partners increase their hygiene and sanitation activities to prevent disease outbreaks especially now the rains have started. Cluster partners reported that they have started to remove dead carcasses found close to water sources to avoid contamination. The meeting also identified the need to develop a cholera emergency preparedness plan and develop a water quality surveillance system (in collaboration with WHO). Since response activities in the WATSAN cluster have been planned up to December, there is a need to strengthen effective coordination in the field and also focus on developing common principles on technical standards for water trucking, drilling and emergency preparedness plans.



Burning Dead Carcasses: Gedo : OCHA 2006

Analysis on UNICEF WATSAN Drought Response

In the water sector UNICEF estimated that approximately 40% of the most vulnerable populations in southern Somalia received the 5 liters of water, per person per day, during the current drought crisis. Their main constraints were poor availability of permanent water sources; insecurity and access problems; difficulty finding technicians with expertise; limited availability and capacity of local partners. At the same time UNICEF does not have the capacity or the mandate to take care of direct implementation.

- **Agriculture**

The seed campaign is on going. All seeds are bought in Somalia and tested before distribution to beneficiaries. Seed lots with low germination rates were rejected in Baioda, causing some delays in the distribution in Bay and Middle Juba but the starting date has now been re-scheduled for 4 May.

De-stocking activities continue despite the rains since the livestock situation is not expected to improve immediately.

- **Health**

The measles mass vaccination campaign and Vitamin A supplementation in all drought affected areas of Bay, Bakol, Lower Juba, Middle Juba and Gedo has been completed in 22 districts and the campaign is ongoing in the remaining eight.

Emergency Health Kit supplies will be provided to Caritas-Somalia in Baidoa (Bay) to support their proposed activity of launching an Out-Patient Department (OPD) in a reconditioned building. It is hoped that the operation of the OPD will contribute to improved medical services in the city.

Health sector partners in the drought affected areas continue with joint planning for the CERF funded activity of mobile health units. Initial information outlines that 24 districts within 8 regions have been highlighted for mobile health services with the participation of 8 NGOs.

The main challenge within the health cluster has been efficient coordination avoiding duplication with working groups and the SACB.

- **Nutrition**

While there has been a record number of beneficiaries' attending supplementary feeding centers in certain sites in southern Somalia, a tremendous amount of work still lies ahead to reach the estimated 50,000 malnourished and vulnerable children in need of dietary assistance. By the first week in May the cluster estimates that only 38% had been reached. Some of the reasons for this are that few agencies in health and nutrition operate in the rural areas of Bay, Southern Gedo and Lower Juba and insecurity has also hampered programme implementation.

Advocacy efforts continue to encourage intervening agencies to address the identified gaps, either through establishing new programmes and/or expansion of existing programmes. Field missions have been undertaken by IMC and World Vision to finalise plans for the Supplementary Feeding Programme in Middle Juba and Bakol. UNICEF is planning to open 18 new feeding sites in south/central and has stated that it needs to strengthen collaboration with health NGOs and WHO to provide comprehensive child health care in these proposed sites.

Nutrition surveillance continues and priority for nutrition assessments is being given to drought-affected regions. Interagency nutrition assessments, led by FSAU have been completed in Bardera town (Gedo) and Buale/Sakow (Middle Juba). Results will be available shortly. Nutrition assessments are currently underway in Afmadow (Lower Juba) and riverine populations in Middle Juba. The nutrition response includes integration with health, nutrition education and malaria programmes.

- **Education**

Somalia has one of the lowest school attendance rates in the world. It is of great concern that in the drought affected regions of Bay, Bakol, Middle and Lower Juba the recent UNICEF school attendance survey reported that an estimated 40% of the schools had closed since September 2005 and those schools, which were still functioning, had an estimated drop out rate of 42%. The drop out situation had equally affected both boys and girls. Cluster initiatives to provide assistance in the education sector include school feeding, teacher incentives, provision of school tents and educational materials. The main challenge now is to streamline operational procedures for developing partnerships between UNICEF and NGOs in order to implement the education response plan allowing more children to access learning facilities.

- **Logistics**

A website dedicated to logistics issues/information on Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa can be found at www.logisticscluster.org. The website is very active and has all the latest information and analysis related to logistics - as well as listing the cluster meeting minutes.

