



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

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

SOMALI

The situation in Somali Region has shown some improvement towards the end of the month, with the opening of trade routes.

The United Nations completed an assessment of the humanitarian situation in three of the five military zones – Degehabur, Korahé and Gode, between 30 August and 5 September and submitted a report with recommendations

to the Government on 9 September. The report was published on 19 September with a press statement by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator urging the Government to support the implementation of the recommendations of the report. A separate report on findings of recommendations of the mission related to human rights and protections of civilians was shared confidentially with the Government on 24 September. The Government has indicated its endorsement of the humanitarian recommendations including increasing commercial food deliveries; short term food assistance; health and nutrition interventions; livestock trade support; water supply; and undertaking an independent investigation of reported human rights violations in the region.

Reports from regional government officials indicate that commercial trade has been reinstated during the last week of September, following the opening of four major trade routes including Dolo, Elbarde, Warder and Hartishek/Togwajale. This has paved the way for the opening of informal smaller routes and has slightly increased the presence of commercial food. Prices of food commodities, however, remain elevated. Emergency food distributions have not stabilized prices of staple foods, including sorghum, in Kebridehar, Fik, Gode, and Degehabur markets. Apart from a slight decrease in the price of sugar, prices of imported items including rice are



increasing. In addition, decline in the price of cattle and camels in many markets are worsened by the current deterioration of livestock body condition.

The United Nations has been consulting with Government and partners on a range of humanitarian interventions which need to begin urgently. The Government has shown support in beginning the implementation of activities in health, nutrition and emergency food assistance. Re-supply of ten health centres in the region by the Regional Health Bureau, supported by UNICEF has begun. The dispatch of 9,632 tonnes of emergency food allocated for 530,000 beneficiaries by DPPA and WFP is ongoing from the previous allocation made in July. To date, dispatches have been finalized in Afder, Liben and Shinile zones and 81 percent of the 5,396 tonnes allocated for Fik, Degehabur, Warder, Korahe and Gode zones has been dispatched. The remaining food will continue to be transported to the region. Fifty eight trucks have been loaded with food aid at Dire Dawa, out of which 40 have departed to their respective destinations.

The food security situation, however, remains of great concern with presence of stress indicators including malnutrition, reduction of meals and consumption of wild foods particularly in Gode, Degehabur, Fik, Warder and Korahe zones. Coping strategies, including migration and over slaughtering of livestock, particularly in the five zones of military operations, have been observed. The situation was aggravated up to the end of September by continued restrictions on movements and market access, which limited access to food. September was also the peak for the dry-*haga* season, with poor access to water and pasture leading to reduced livestock production.

Flooding along the Wabishebbelle basin devastated villages in Mustahil, Kelafo and Ferfer woredas, following heavy rains in the highlands of Oromiya Region during the month. A joint government and humanitarian partners' mission conducted a rapid assessment in the flood affected woredas of Mustahil, Kelafo and Ferfer from 24-30 September. The mission reported that approximately 48,300 people are affected, of whom 8,880 are displaced. The floods have also damaged an estimated 5,630 hectares of farmland (4,750 hectares in Mustahail and 880 hectares in Kelafo) in the three woredas. Access has also been restricted to some villages and this could be further aggravated by the forthcoming *deyr* season (rainy season). In addition, WHO reported that incidences of water borne diseases particularly Biliharzia have increased.

Apart from the *karma* rains receiving zones - Shinile and Jijiga, the remaining seven zones experienced the peak of the dry *haga* season in September. This has reduced pasture and water availability. The usual coping mechanism – migration - has been affected by the security situation, which has restricted movement of livestock and herders. Consequently, resources are depleted and the physical condition of livestock has deteriorated mainly in parts of Korahe, Warder, Gode, Degehabur, and Fik

zones. Some parts of these zones have started receiving the *deyr* rains at the end of the month. The performance of these rains is crucial for farming short cycled crops, replenishing water sources and regeneration of pasture and browse.

In its September Food Security Update the regional DPPB reported a serious water shortage in the chronically water insecure and *birkad* dependent areas of Fik, Warder, Degehabur, Liben, Korahe and Afder. The situation was further worsened by new borehole breakdowns in Warder and Korahe and declining water levels in Korahe, Afder, and Fik with the intensifying *haga*.

The human health situation was worrying in the region particularly with increased AWD and malnutrition reports. Increased incidences of AWD were reported in Fik, Jijiga and Shinile zones. In addition, malnutrition is reported in Fik town and there are indications of marasmus among children in rural parts of Korahe, Warder, and Degehabur. Save the Children UK is conducting a rapid nutritional assessment in Fik zone. Meanwhile, UNICEF in collaboration with the RHB is currently supplying essential drugs, medical supplies, disinfectants and soap to ten health posts in selected woredas.

The DPPB update indicates that the situation of IDPs in Fafen and Hartisheik camps of Jijiga and Maesso of Shinile zone remains of concern. These groups are chronically dependent on food aid. Continuation of humanitarian support and sustainable solutions including re-integration are needed.

OROMIYA

Food security in the lowland areas of Oromiya Region continues to be of concern. The situation is alarming in eleven lowland kebeles of Liben woreda in Guji zone with a recent verification assessment mission estimating that 91,000 people are in need of humanitarian assistance from October to December.



The food security situation in the lowlands of eastern Oromiya Region, including in the lowlands of East and West Hararghe, Bale, Borena and Guji zones has been worrying. The situation could further deteriorate with the late start and poor distribution of *meher* rains, which has resulted in poor *meher* season crop development to date.



In the lowlands of East and West Hararghe, Guji, Bale and Borena zones, rains began one month late and forecasts indicate that they will continue to be below average. Similar rain performance has also been reported along the Rift Valley.

The situation is compounded as people in these areas are already facing food shortages due to the inadequate performance of the *belg* (March to May) rains. Extreme coping strategies, including sale of draft oxen, rental of farmland and increased wild food consumption were reported in these areas by the *belg* assessment mission. FEWSNET, in its September update, highlights the need to urgently provide emergency assistance to the non-PSNP woredas and increase the use of the 20 percent contingency fund in PSNP woredas.

Food security is further aggravated by adverse weather conditions. Hailstorms destroyed crops in Darimu, Bure and Gechi woredas of Illubabur zone; Robe woreda in Arsi zone; Wichale woreda in North Shew zone. In Bure and Wichale woredas 100 percent of the crop has been damaged. West Hararghe, Gemechis, Anchar, Chiro, Doba, Tulo and Kuni woredas also experienced hailstorms and the impact is being assessed.

Increased cases of malnutrition were reported from Sheneka resettlement sites of Bale zone. In addition, the food security situation of IDPs in East Wollega zone is deteriorating and requires immediate attention.

Apart from Dilo and Magado kebeles in Dire woreda, Borena zone, where Kenyan Refugees are residing, availability of water for both human and animal consumption was normal across the region.

AWD continued to be reported during the month. East Hararghe was re-infected and increased cases were reported in Arsi zone. The Regional Water Bureau reported that they do not have adequate resources for response. Meanwhile, DPPA has provided the green light to use resources from the federal non-food stock, which includes water and sanitation materials.

GAMBELLA

While the situation for returnees in Akobo remains stable, new flooding during the month has affected parts of Gambella town and other areas in the region.

A recent OCHA monitoring mission to Akobo and other areas in the west of Gambella Region found that the humanitarian situation has been exacerbated by a lack of food, clean water, health clinics, and education. In Tiergol kebele, Akobo woreda, particularly, the Government has yet to re-establish the education system and there are no school buildings or teachers. Moreover, there are no proper health clinics or medical services available in the village. Inaccessibility aggravated by the rainy season and consequential flooding, has hindered transportation and efficient levels of humanitarian assistance.

Recommendations include stronger coordination by the regional government with UN and NGO partners, the distribution of food aid in Akobo and greater investment in public infrastructure. IOM and ZOA Refugee Care financed by the Humanitarian Response Fund are responding to non-food needs.



Parts of Gambella town and the capital of Lare woreda have recently been flooded for the second time. The Baro and Gilo Rivers overflowed, inundating eight woredas destroying crop land and further restricting access. The current flood has affected the inhabitants of Gambella town, 2270 individuals and 537 households have been displaced and temporarily sheltered in schools, farmer training centres and other locations. The Regional DPFSB diverted food from regular emergency beneficiaries for those affected by flooding in the town. In addition, the federal DPPA has deployed two staff to Gambella Region to assess the situation and assist in response.

The Regional Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Taskforce chaired by the Regional Water, Mines and Energy Resources Development Bureau is coordinating response at regional level.

AMHARA

Apart from increased reports of AWD, the food security situation in Amhara Region was normal during the month.

Good *meher* season crop production is anticipated in the region, apart from pocket areas in the highlands where flood and hailstorm as well as water logging have caused some damages. Performance of all crops was rated as satisfactory in all agro-ecological zones, following normal rains. All crops are at their normal cropping stages. Barley was at harvesting stage; while wheat, sorghum, maize, *teff* pulses were at grain filling and maturity stage during the reporting period. Prices of staple crops, however, have shown an increasing trend apart from areas with fresh barley harvest.

According to an OCHA mission, flood waters from late August have receded and most displaced people have returned to their areas of origin, apart from 15 households



in Dewachafa woreda. Response is ongoing and interventions related to seed, livestock and water and sanitation are underway by World Vision, FHI, CARE and FAO with funding from Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF).



To date, AWD cases are reported in 41 woredas in nine zones. New areas were affected by the disease including, Ankasha in Awi zone; Bahri Dar Zuria in West Gojam zone; and Hulet Eju Enesie and Machakel in East Gojam zone. Bahir Dar town was also re-infected during the month. UNICEF reported that the reporting system is a major challenge as there is no standard reporting methodology/matrix utilized.

TIGRAY

While the situation in the flood affected areas has improved, AWD cases continue to be reported in Tigray Region.

To date a total of 3,374 AWD cases with 82 deaths have been reported since AWD re-appeared in August 2007. The majority of the deaths were reported from a desert gold mine in Aseged Tsebela woreda, contributing towards a high case fatality rate of 3 percent. The situation is particularly of concern in Alamata and Raya Azebo woredas in the Southern zone and in areas neighboring Kobo woreda, North Wello zone, Amhara Region. Meanwhile, decreased cases in Humera were observed as daily labourers returned to their homes for the holiday season.

Response has been hindered by the absence of health professionals from the region due to their attendance at summer schools and lack of information on the situation on the ground. According to the region, water disinfectant is also required. MSF-H, REST and UNICEF are supporting the region in the ongoing response.

The situation in the flood affected areas of Atsbi Womberta, Werie Lehe, Mereb Lehe woredas has improved.

SNNP

While most parts of SNNPR have received normal rainfall,

adverse weather conditions in localized areas resulted in flooding with some fatalities, damage to crops and infrastructure.

UNICEF reported that Gedeo, most parts of Sidama, western parts of Gurage and Kaffa zones received heavy rainfall with hailstorms. Other areas including Wolayta, low land parts of Sidama, Dawro, Gamo Gofa and Kembatta Tembaro zones, however, received heavy rainfall resulting in floods and landslides in some instances.

The findings of the recent joint Government-humanitarian partners' verification assessment in nine woredas of SNNPR indicate that approximately 81,000 people have been affected by both natural and manmade disasters. Flooding affected 40,536 people in five woredas - Humbo, Mirab Abaya, Dasenech, Hammer and Loka Abaya. In Kindo Dadiye and Bonke woredas, an estimated 12,720 people were affected by landslides. The most severe impacts of which were particularly felt in Kindo Dadiye woreda where 12 people were killed and 218 households were displaced. Tensions in Burji and Amaro woredas, following intense conflict between the Gujis and Amaros and Burjis in October 2006 continues to prevent agricultural activities in certain areas due to security concerns. The assessment team has recommended that assistance should be extended for the last four months of the year to 21,576 emergency beneficiaries that were identified in the visited woredas.

In Kaffa zone, reports indicate that 58 hectares of mature crops were destroyed and 24 households were displaced to temporary shelters. Some 35 hectares of maize and haricot beans were also damaged by flooding and hailstorm in Demeke and Bilawanja kebeles of Wulbareg woreda, Silte zone.

In Awassa, the water level of the lake increased and inundated surrounding residences and farmland. The Ethiopian Red Cross provided food and non-food assistance.

The amount and distribution of the rain in most areas has been favourable for *meher* crop production. In addition, harvesting of the *belg* crop has been completed in most parts of the region and the majority of crops are now found at germination stage. Peppers in Alaba, coffee in Gedeo

zone and sorghum in Derashe woreda were found at seedling stage while pea and bean in Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro woreda are at flowering stage.

There is no shortage of pasture and water and the performance of livestock in most parts of the region is rated to be normal and above normal. An outbreak of black leg disease has been controlled in Sidama zone. In Dereshe Special Woreda, however, black leg disease was reported in Goreze kebele and Contagious Caprine Pleuro Pneumonia (CCPP) was reported in Bateya, Shale, Walesa, Keyama and Gonota kebeles. There is a shortage of medicine and vaccines and adequate treatment has not been received by infected shoats.



There was a slight increment in the price levels of both crops and livestock. There was a reduction in the price of maize and *teff* from Derashe Special Woreda. The price of pepper, however, has increased in Gamo Gofa zone, Alaba Special Woreda and Gurage zone.

There is no significant disease outbreak in the region. AWD, however, continues to be reported in Alaba Special Woreda and Kembatta Tembaro, Sidama and Hadiya zones. Although AWD has not been completely controlled, there has been significant improvement in all affected areas. Gedeo zone, for example, has had zero reports for the last few weeks. Shortages of water chemical treatment, however, continue to be a challenge for response.

AFAR

The food security situation has improved in Afar Region due to the good performance of the *karma* rains. AWD cases, however, continue to be reported.

The *karma* season long rains have now concluded but have generally contributed to improved food security at household levels. Improved water and pasture availability has enhanced the physical condition of livestock and has been sufficient for such long rains dependent crops as maize, sorghum and *teff*.



During the month, 280 cases of AWD and 16 deaths from Amibara, Assaytia, Chifra, Dallol, Dubti and Yallo woredas were reported. Two new woredas have been affected – Gulina Yalo in Zone 4 and Dallol in Zone 2. Accessibility and limited health services including shortages of skilled health personnel remain as key challenges for response. September's food security and early warning update for Afar Region report that the situation is likely to spread due to the mobility of pastoralists, the low level of sanitation and safe water supply together with the low level of public awareness on personal and environmental hygiene.

The Regional government, however, has shown high level commitment to combating the AWD epidemic. Coordination has been strengthened since the establishment of a bimonthly AWD coordination meeting which meets at the Regional Health Bureau. CARE and AMREF are supporting the regional government's effort in zone 3; and Oxfam and APDA are actively participating in the control of AWD in zone 1 and 5. Gaps, however,

remain particularly in the newly affected woredas of Gulina Yalo and Dallol where there is very poor health coverage and no NGOs are present.

Flood waters in Gewane and Bure Mudaytu have begun to recede. Reports indicate, however, that much of the grazing land in Galifaghe of Assaytia woreda is still inundated and pasture and browse has been destroyed.

The Afar Regional DPPB, the Regional Water Bureau, UNICEF, CARE and OXFAM GB visited the flood affected woredas of Gewane and Bure Mudaytu in late September.

The findings of the team indicate that out of a total of 14 kebeles that were inundated, Meteka, Adbaru and Brieferu kebeles in Gewane woreda, and Debel, Gefremu and Beidaforu in Bure Mudaytu woreda were the most severely affected. These communities have no safe water supply. In addition, public facilities, including schools and the health clinic in Debel have been submerged by the flood waters. Although, no major epidemics have been reported thus far, there is an increased risk of malaria and other waterborne diseases including AWD. Among the outstanding needs identified are: boats for the relocation of people in Beida and Adbaru kebeles; medical supplies and drugs including ITNs and Coartem; the continuation of food aid for the coming three months; health education; strengthening the woreda AWD and flood control committee and the provision of potable water to the affected community.

FDPPA provided food and non-food assistance including 90 tonnes of wheat, 10.7 tonnes of CSB, 2.7 tonnes oil, 200 plastic sheet, 2,000 plastic cup and plates for Gewane woreda. Similarly, 67 tonnes of wheat, 5 tonnes of CSB, 5.6 tonnes oil, 2,000 plastic cups and 2000 plastic plates were provided to Bure Mudaytu.

A tree locust infestation is reported in Zone 1, 2, 4 and 5. The infestation affected Dubti, Assayita, Mille, Uwa, Awra, Yallo, Gewane and Magalle woredas and is currently spreading to other areas due to favourable wet conditions. A similar infestation also occurred in the region at the same time last year. The Pastoral and Rural Development Bureau should conduct a rapid assessment to identify its coverage and impact in order to ensure the required response.

FIELD TESTING OF INTER-SECTORAL RAPID ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Two team comprising 5 persons each are field testing a new multi-sectoral rapid assessment tool in Bure Mudaytu woreda, Afar Region and Boset woreda, East Showa zone in Oromiya Region from 16 to 18 October. Ethiopia is one of 12 countries selected to field test the new tool, developed by three global clusters - health, nutrition and water and sanitation (WASH).

Building on and streamlining existing methodologies, the new tool aims to enable initial assessments to be conducted within the first 72 hours of a crisis, to support joint planning for an urgent and appropriate humanitarian



response. Improvement in the standardization of core data collected in acute emergencies is anticipated. Other benefits expected include timely identification and prioritization of locations that require assistance as well as the sectors that require intervention. The tool aims to reduce duplication of efforts among humanitarian actors and facilitate the work of the country's clusters in carrying out a common, initial, rapid assessment and analysis. Lessons learned from the field testing exercise will be used to streamline and finalise the tool.

Implementation or planned implementation of the cluster approach; documented risk of deterioration in humanitarian conditions (due to natural or man-made factors); and geographic and socioeconomic variation were among the criteria used for selecting field testing countries.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS

In Addis Ababa

October 16,30	WASH Emergency Task Force Meeting, MoWR, 10:00a.m (Open to all)
October 16	UN Operations Management Group meeting, UNDP, 03:00p.m., (UN-Internal Only)
October 17	UN Communication Officers meeting, UNDP, 10:00a.m. (UN-Internal Only)
October 17, 31	Health Partners Forum Meeting, WHO Conference room, 02:30p.m. (Open to all)
October 17, 31	HRF Review Board meeting, UN OCHA, 03:00p.m. (UN-Internal Only)
October 18	Information sharing meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Somali Region, UNDP, 03:00p.m (Invitations only)
October 19, 26	UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30a.m (Open to all)