



FOCUS ON Ethiopia

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HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:
REGIONAL OVERVIEW
NEWS: POOR RAIN FORECAST FROM MARCH TO MAY
UPCOMING & ONGOING MEETINGS

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 food security situation further deteriorated in February as *Jilal* (dry season) continues. Severe water shortages and very poor pasture will remain to be major problems until the onset of the *gu* rains in mid-April. A joint Somali Region Multi-Sectoral Drought Emergency Response Plan that seeks approximately ETB 35 million to address outstanding sectoral requirements for a period of six months has been released by the regional government.

The Emergency Response Plan indicated that over one million people are currently facing critical water shortage in 33 woredas and requested for seven million ETB to provide immediate water tracking interventions. The Regional Water Bureau (RWB) has allocated ETB 1.9 million for response, leaving a five million birr gap. Additionally the plan requests ETB 9.1 million to address water and sanitation needs in the region. The Federal WASH Taskforce convened two extraordinary meetings on 28 February and 4 March to facilitate timely response.

According to the DPPB/SC UK February Food Security Update critical water shortages are widely reported in many parts of the *deyr* receiving zones. The *berkad* dependent areas in Korahe, Warder and Degehabur zones and other chronically water insecure areas across Fik, Gode, Afer, Liben, Degehabur, Korahe and Shinile zones, which are directly dependent on the seasonal rainfall for replenishment are currently facing severe shortages of water. The report also indicates that prices of water have reached historical high levels in the worst affected woredas.

The RWB provides 32 percent of the region's water through water schemes and boreholes. Half of these water supply systems are non-functional and in need of rehabilitation further reducing the available water. The RWB together with



UNICEF have identified 28 boreholes that are in need of immediate rehabilitation throughout the region. Although water trucking is the immediate requirement, UNICEF has highlighted that rehabilitation of existing water systems is equally crucial. With the current level of water sources, there will not be enough water available for trucking. Thus far, water trucking has started in parts of Filtu and Hudet woredas of Liben zone, Shilabo woreda of Korahe zone and Denan woreda in Gode. UNICEF has allocated US\$ 52,000 to DPPB for water trucking in Fik, Degehabur and Warder for one month. Additionally, US\$ 50,000 has been allocated to the RWB for rehabilitation of boreholes. UNICEF is currently waiting for funding from CERF, HRF and other donors to scale up interventions. Hope for the Horn reported that water sources in Boh, Geladin, Danot and Gashamo woredas are being quickly depleted due to large concentration of pastoralists from Somaliland and Somalia. Meanwhile, ACF successfully completed water trucking in Calen kebele in Shilabo woredas in Korahe zone and has secured funding to water truck to additional 11 areas with critical water shortages in Shilabo, Debeweyin and Kebridehar woredas. OWDA is also undertaking water trucking intervention in Denan.

The Emergency Response Plan seeks ETB 14.4 to address health and nutrition related emergencies in the region. Apart from reports of suspected cases of Acute Watery Diarrhoea in Sagag, Degehamadow and Liben zone especially Dolo Ado areas bordering Kenya and suspected cases of measles in Gode zone, no major disease outbreak was reported in the region. Increased incidences of malaria cases are also reported in the riverine areas of Afder, Gode and Liben zones. Endemic diseases including TB, diarrheal disease and respiratory tract infections continue to be reported. The RHB supported by UNICEF and WHO have completed a massive measles campaign in all the 52 woredas of the region targeting 783,000 under five children. Preliminary results indicated 91 percent coverage. Meanwhile, the RHB is planning a post campaign survey.



Intensified internal and cross border livestock migrations from Somaliland and Central Somalia are exerting additional pressure on resources and increasing risks of disease outbreaks. Increased deaths of cattle and shoats were reported in Donot, Warder, Geladi and Boh woredas in Warder zone; Gode, Denan and Ferfer woredas in Gode zone and Debewoyin and Shilabo woredas in Korahe zone. Recent reports have also indicated that over 200

shoats, mainly goats, have died in Gashamo woreda of Degehabur zone in the last one and half month reportedly due to disease infection by animals from other areas including from Somaliland. Disease induced livestock deaths have also been reported from Aware woreda of Degehabur zone. In Aysha'a woreda of Shinile zone, goats and cattle have died of a local disease – *soon-son*. IRC has undertaken interventions and the situation is controlled. A recent rapid assessment in North East of Kebridehar indicates a suspected anthrax case in Marsin. CCPP and pastoralissis were found in most places. No drugs or veterinary services were available.

Poor physical condition of livestock was reported in Hamero woreda in Fik zone and Meisso and Afdem woredas in Shinile zone. A recent rapid assessment in North East of Kebridehar indicates stretched coping mechanisms including slaughtering of calves in Gabogabo, Nostarek, Mersin and Iskudonle areas. There are serious concerns that the situation could deteriorate in the coming few weeks with the progressing dry season. The DPPB/SC UK February update also indicated that livestock production is rapidly deteriorating, affecting protein access at household levels. The Emergency Response Plan seeks ETB 2.8 million for livestock and agricultural related interventions. Pre-positioning of drugs, establishment of livestock feeding centres, water trucking for livestock and de-stocking were among identified priorities in the sector.

Unfavourable terms of trade for pastoralists continued to be reported in February. The DPPB/SC UK monthly update also indicated that the terms of trade between staple food items and livestock prices compared to the same period last year have declined in all markets due to an increase in staple prices and lack of demand and/or decreased in livestock prices. In Kebridehar market, the price of a camel has significantly reduced from 1,500 ETB in January to 1,300 ETB in February. A similar trend is also reported for shoats and cattle prices.

Meanwhile the security situation in Kebridehar, Jijiga and Degehabur towns was calm in February. Movements are however, restricted in some areas. Mobile teams continue to face difficulties in visiting their operational areas on a regular basis, particularly in Korahe, Degehabur and Fik zones. Some access challenges were reported in some of the military operation zones delaying humanitarian interventions. Meanwhile, as of 10 March DPPA has dispatched 24,045 MT of food aid to the five priority zones under military operations, of which more than 16,837 MT has reached the destination. No food has been delivered to Degehabur zone since December 2007 resulting in further deterioration of food security situations in the areas. Logistic challenges related to shortage of trucks and delay in secondary food transportation to Food Distribution Points persists.

OROMIYA

The humanitarian situation in the lowland agro-pastoral areas of Oromiya Region is reaching critical level according to reports from UN agencies, government and humanitarian partners. Communities living in affected woredas across Borena, Bale, Guji, East and West Hararghe zones of the



region are contending with rising levels of food insecurity, loss of livestock and severe water shortages.

Current reports indicate that situation in Arero, Dhas, Dillo, Dire, Miyo, Moyale, Teltele and Yabello woredas in Borena zone; Bedeno, Chenaksen, Kurfa Chelle, Metta, Babile, Gursum, Meyu, Muluke, Gole Oda and Midhega Tola woredas in East Hararghe zone; Darolebu, Boke, Kune and Hawi Gudina woredas in West Hararghe zone and Raytu, Dawe Serer, Dawe Kachen, Sewina, Medawolabo, Delo Mena and Legehida woredas in Bale zone is deteriorating on a daily basis. People are drawing upon traditional coping mechanisms and assistance from government and humanitarian partners to deal with the consequences of growing food insecurity.

The impact of the extended dry season upon human health, food and water security, livelihoods and animal health has been exacerbated by cumulative effects of failure of consecutive rainy seasons. The upcoming rains are expected to perform poorly in the region leading to further deterioration of conditions in the coming weeks. CARE in its February update has also indicated that further delay or failure in the rains will affect the future production of crops like maize and sorghum.

Reports from UN agencies, government and NGO partners document extreme water shortages in affected woredas due to continued dry conditions and near-total depletion of water sources. According to FEWS-NET, the shortage of pasture and water has forced entire families to leave their home areas in search of resources for livestock. Water shortages are affecting access to education due to forced closure of schools and children who tend livestock are dropping-out from education as the search for water and pasture takes priority over school attendance. According to the most recent figures available from the Emergency Coordination Meeting in Borena zone; 29 schools in the eight affected woredas in Borena zone have been forced to close and approximately 3700 children have dropped out of full-time education.



Dry conditions have seriously affected condition of livestock and OCHA field reports document a growing number of livestock deaths as well as general deterioration of animal health across affected woredas. According to

figures released by the Regional Bureau in Dillo, Dire, Dahas, Teltele, Arero, Miyo, Moyale and Yabello woredas, a total of 14,334 livestock deaths were recorded during the month of February.

Reserve of food stores are dwindling due to extended dry season following two consecutive periods of drought in the region. Local markets have a limited supply of food stocks and prices of basic provisions, such as grain, have increased leaving already vulnerable groups particularly exposed to food insecurity.

Health partners record increased levels of malnutrition associated with food insecurity and poor livestock health and are particularly concerned about the lack of milk due to poor condition of livestock for nutritional well-being of vulnerable groups. A recent house-to-house MUAC screening by CARE in Harelo Kebele of Dire woreda found that 19.5 percent of screened children under the age of five were suffering from malnutrition with a MUAC of less than 12.5 cm. Health partners anticipate an increase in epidemics associated with water shortages and poor condition of existing water sources. Cases of measles have been reported in Hambela, Kercha and Odo Shakiso woredas in Guji zone and four woredas in Borena zone. The roll-out of a measles vaccination campaign across all affected woredas is facing challenges in relation to funding. Hambella and Kercha in Guji zone have been designated the woredas most affected by the current measles outbreak and MSF-Belguim and the Regional Health Bureau are carrying out a measles immunization campaign and case management activities.

Furthermore, fire hazard destroyed large areas of forests, bushes and farmlands in eastern and south eastern areas the region. Shakiso woreda in Guji zone is the area where the biggest loss occurred with over 2,500 ha affected including 60 ha of coffee and *enset* farms. Losses on wild animals, displacement of eight households and damages to bee hives were also reported in the same woreda.

Government and humanitarian partners have concentrated support to address priority issues of water provision, animal health and food security. The Oromiya Water Resources Development Bureau and DPPA have already deployed four water trucks to distribute water to communities living in affected woredas of Arero, Dillo, Dire and Moyale. The zonal water bureau are working in partnership with CARE and UNICEF to distribute 5 litre ration of water to 56,000 people identified as having high priority water needs in the Borena zone. Humanitarian partners, including Danish Church Aid, GOAL, Norwegian Church Aid, Oxfam USA and partner agency AFD, are responding to chronic water shortages through water tankering, water rationing and water rehabilitation schemes in affected woredas. Local authorities and humanitarian partners including AFD, CARE, GAYO, Save the Children USA and World Vision have supported a number of interventions including animal feeding programmes and vaccination against livestock disease to guard against further livestock death in the region. Efforts are underway to deliver emergency food assistance to affected communities and supplementary feeding programmes have begun in a number of woredas.



Government, NGOs and UN agencies working in the region recognise that the level of humanitarian assistance needs to be scaled up in the coming weeks to ensure protection of livelihoods, livestock and human health. Urgent needs requiring targeted response in the coming weeks include; emergency food assistance, funding for measles vaccination campaigns, malaria prevention and meningitis, support to animal health initiatives and water provision.

SNNP

The extended dry spell in some lowland woredas of SNNP that contributed to the failure of sweet potato and sporadic reports of meningitis were among the major humanitarian challenges reported in February.

A deteriorating food security situation was reported in the chronically food insecure areas of Kedida Gamela and Kacha Bira woredas in Kembata Tembaro; Shashago woreda in Hadiya zone; Damot Fullasa, Bolososore, Damot Woide woredas in Welayita zone; Hamer and Bena Tsemay woredas in South Omo zone; Derashe and Amaro special woredas due to the early interruption of *meher* rains (June to November) and failure of sweet potato, main staple crop, that normally bridges the food gap until the next production season complementing *meher* harvests. The situation was further aggravated due to the delay of *belg* rains affecting land preparation and planting.

The extended dry spell created serious water shortage for people and livestock consumption in Boricha and Loka Abaya in Sidama zone; Bedawocho woreda in Hadiya zone; Lanfuro, Daloch, Sankura and Wulbareg woredas of Silte zone; Mareko and Meskan woredas of Gurage zone; Nynagatom woreda of South Omo zone; and Hamer, Bena Tsemay and Alaba Special woredas. The Regional Government has commenced water tankering in Boricha and Loko Abaya woredas. The situation could further deteriorate and expand to other parts unless the *belg* rains start.

Shortage of pasture and water forced pastoralists to migrate early to the traditional water and grazing reserves in Hamer, Bena Tsemay, Male, Dasench, Selamago and Nynagatom woredas of South Omo zone. The quality of livestock particularly of cattle was rated below normal in all lowland woredas. There was however, no outbreak of livestock disease reported.

Sporadic clinical cases of Meningitis continued to be reported from different parts including Sidama, Gedio, Welayita, and Gamo Goffa zones. The RHB reported 65 cases with three deaths to FMOH. Woreda health offices and health personnel were notified to strengthen active surveillance in their respective areas. Health Extension Workers and Community Health Persons were also sensitized to raise awareness in the community. Preparation to train health workers especially in areas where cases were reported is underway.

Food supplies are limited and prices are elevated in most markets of the region as farmers are retaining their stock due to the poor performance of current *belg* season. On the other hand, livestock price remained stable compared to the same period last year, apart from South Omo zone where prices of cattle and shoat declined.

Other emergency incidences including fire outbreak, desert swarm and hot water eruption have also been reported during the month. Fire outbreak caused by the dry and windy weather condition reportedly damaged 58 houses in four woredas of Gurage zone. A similar incidence was also reported in some kebeles of Gamo Gofa zone. In Konso Special Woreda, a swarm of locust was reported for the third time since December 2007. The infestation has been controlled through traditional methods without causing much damage. Furthermore, hot water eruption was reported in the densely populated Ajira kebele along the rift valley in Silte woreda. The situation did not cause serious damage.



To assess the magnitude and impact of the overall situation, a federal team was deployed on 12 March. In addition, a regional multi-sectoral team is undertaking a comprehensive assessment in eight zones and two special woredas. A Rapid Assessment team, led by Regional ENCU, is also conducting rapid assessments in Shashego, Damot Fullasa, Damowoyede and Bolososore woredas. Meanwhile, World Vision is conducting standard nutritional surveys under its regular monitoring programme in Western-Abaya and Boreda woredas in Gamo Gofa, zone; Humbo and Sodo woredas in Welayita zone; Boricha, Tula and Awassa Zuria woredas in Sidama zone. GOAL is undertaking nutrition intervention in Boricha woreda.

Afar

The food security situation in Afar needs to be closely monitored due to the failure of short *dadaa* rains (December-January) in some woredas that resulted in acute water shortage and deteriorating Terms of Trade for pastoralists.



The *dadaa* rains, which contribute significantly to the replenishment of pasture and livestock feed availability in most parts, failed in Elidaar, Dubti, Asaytia woredas in Zone 1; Dalifagi and Hadelela woredas in Zone 5 and Afdera woredas in Zone 2. The below normal performance of previous *karma* rains (July-August) compounded with the failure of *dadaa* rains in these areas contributed to water shortage and poor availability of pasture and browse. Meanwhile, according to the regional DPPFSB and SC-UK February report, delay in the delivery of PSNP resources for the last three months contributed to the deterioration of food security in most woredas of the region.

The report also indicates that the food security situation is of particular concern in Elidar woreda, which significantly deteriorated during the month. Acute water shortage is reported in nine out of the 17 kebeles. Most water sources in the woreda have dried. According to the report, two schools in Eiseilu and Aiso kebeles were closed, while 77 percent of students in Adigno have reportedly dropped out. There are also reports of increased movement of livestock and concentration in the two grazing lands in the woreda - Dubi and Imune. Water trucking and livestock feed are among the identified immediate emergency interventions to save lives and livelihoods. Provision of water has started in Manda and Bure kebeles.

The existing water shortage is feared to further escalate in light of poor NMA forecast for the upcoming *sugum* rains, which is feared to affect more woredas including Berhale and Erebt. On the other hand, water and pasture availability has slightly improved in few woredas that received few days shower including Abaala, Ewa, Aura and Dewe.

No major human health outbreak was reported during the month. According to FMOH, AWD has been contained for almost two months.

During the month, livestock diseases were reported in some areas. According to FARM AFRICA, sheep and goat pox disease killed 44 sheep and goats in two kebeles in Dalifage woreda. Rapid response including vaccination campaign is crucial to control further spread of the disease, particularly in light of increased concentration of livestock in few grazing areas. Furthermore, CARE in its February update reported PPR disease outbreak in Fentale, Dulecha, Gewane, Awash Fentale, Amibara and Buremudayitu woredas. Vaccination campaign has thus far been conducted only in Amibara and Buremudayitu woredas due to financial constraints. Unconfirmed cattle deaths were also reported in Dalol woreda of Zone 2. CARE also reported unknown camel disease outbreak in Gewane woreda.

Meanwhile, according to the regional food security update, prices of cereals (maize and wheat) have increased by 3-to-15 percent. The price of livestock, on the other hand is declining due to the deteriorating livestock body condition, which continues to adversely affect terms of trade for pastoralists.

AMHARA

Although the food security situation in the region remained stable in February, *belg* plantation has been delayed by almost two months creating food security concerns particularly in pocket areas of Gubalfto woreda in North Wollo zone. Increased seasonal labour migration and high school dropout rates were reported in the woreda. The local administration provided immediate food and cash safety net payment and is starting activities to utilize the 20 percent contingency fund in discussion with the region.

There was no report of *belg* rains during the month. This further delayed *belg* crops plantation - out of 254,449 ha of land planned, only 24,208 ha (9.5 percent) were planted thus far. Extension of the dry spell could result a total failure of *belg* production affecting *belg* dependent areas.



Planted crops are currently at seedling stage, but their performance is very poor due to moisture stress. Relatively better planting activities were conducted in North Shoa zone. Additionally, in Menz area of the zone planting season can be extended until April.

The physical and health condition of livestock was normal due to adequate feed and water availability. Absence of *belg* rains however, could create shortage in the coming months.

There were no major reports of unusual human diseases outbreak. Meanwhile, the TSF/CSI program is contributing for the improvement of health status in the region.

A significant price increment for staple grains has been reported during the month. A 100 percent increment in a price of sorghum and a 30 percent increase in price of *teff* were reported in Shoa Robit market of North Shoa zone. A relatively stable price trend was however, recorded the livestock market.

GAMBELLA

The below normal food security situation in Gambella Region has been further affected by the Murle cattle raiding in February. Repatriation of Sudanese refugees to South Sudan resumed.



The February FEWS-NET report indicates that the food security situation in Akobo, Jikawo, Jor and Wontoha woredas is poor as the main harvest was reduced due to extensive flood damage to *meher* crops. Communities living in affected woredas are vulnerable to food shortages and local markets susceptible to price increases due to limited supply of produce. UNICEF report that average price of staple foods and livestock has increased significantly compared to prices of produce in previous years.

Cattle raiding by armed Murle groups crossing the border from South Sudan have led to loss of livestock and displacement of some pastoralists in affected areas of Akobo, Wantuha and Jikawo. According to reports from the UNICEF office in Gambella, an estimated 4,600 people have been displaced from Akobo and Wantuah woredas due to the Murle raids. Murle also raided 5200 cattle from Akobo and 2565 cattle from Wantuha.

Repatriation of refugees from Gambella to South Sudan has resumed with assistance from UNHCR, IOM and the Ethiopian Government's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). A total of 605 refugees from Bonga camp have been voluntarily returned to Blue Nile State in South Sudan. WFP and FAO provided reintegration package for returned refugees upon arrival in South Sudan. The reintegration package includes; three month supply of food, seeds and agricultural tools to ensure that returning refugees have the necessary provisions to begin their new lives in South Sudan. UNHCR plans to complete the repatriation of all Sudanese refugees currently residing in Bonga and Dimma camps in western Ethiopia by May 2008.

TIGRAY

The food security situation in Tigray remains stable in February. A deteriorating food security situation was however, reported in Zalanbessa town by an assessment team consisting of DPPA, WFP, and Regional Trade, Industry, and Transport Bureau, and Dedebit Credit and Saving Enterprise.

Although the *belg* rains have stopped since the second half of January, land preparation was ongoing anticipating the late rains in March. Supply of both cereals and livestock is normal in all markets. The prices of both cereals and livestock however, have shown an increasing trend in six selected markets. There was no report of human health problem including acute malnutrition. Furthermore, the physical condition of livestock was normal in all woredas of the region.

POOR RAIN FORECAST FROM MARCH TO MAY: FEWSNET

FEWS-NET in its February update indicates below normal outlook of seasonal rains in the eastern half of Ethiopia between March and May 2008, according to the NMA recent forecast (31 January). These rains significantly contribute to water and pasture replenishment in the southeastern pastoral areas, including most parts of Somali Region, adjacent lowlands of Oromiya Region, and

South Omo zone of SNNPR, where they are the main rains. The rains are also crucial for the northeastern highlands, the northeastern pastoral areas, along the Rift Valley and most crop producing areas of SNNPR. The March-to-May rains also mark the start of the long rainy season, *kiremt*, for the western parts of the country.

In addition to the present adverse impact of the poor performance of last year's rains in the pastoral areas that face extreme food insecurity, the anticipated below normal performance of the rains are also forecasted to affect the *belg* crop producing areas of the country in the northeastern highlands, central and southern parts. *Belg* planting is delayed in most northeastern highlands and SNNPR, which is anticipated to result in below normal or failed *belg* production in July/August. The report recommends for an immediate preparation of joint government and humanitarian partners contingency plan to mitigate adverse impacts of poor March to May rains performance. For more information contact: Ethiopia@fews.net

UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS

In Addis Ababa

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| March 18 | Ethiopian Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT) Meeting, UNDP conference room, 09:00a.m. (UN-Internal only) |
| March 19 | UN/NGO Information Sharing Meeting, UN OCHA, 10:00a.m., (Invitations Only) |
| March 20 | Oromiya Regional Emergency Coordination Meeting, Oromiya Food Security & DPPA Commissioner's Office, 02:00p.m. (Open to all) |
| March 21, 28 | UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30a.m (Open to all) |

In the Regions – Somali and Oromiya

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| March 17, 24, 31 | 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) |
| March 18 | Humanitarian Coordination Meeting, WFP Conference Room, 09:00a.m, Gode (Open to all) |
| March 19, 26 | 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, 05:00p.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| March 19 | Area Security Meeting, WFP Conference Room, 04:00p.m, Gode (Open to all) |
| March 19 | Area Security Meeting, UN Compound, 04:00p.m., Jijiga (Open to all) |
| March 20, 27 | Humanitarian Co-ordination Forum Meeting, UN Conference room, 09:00a.m, Kebridehar (Open to all) |
| March 21 | Borena Coordination meeting, Yabello, Oromiya (open to all) |