



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

A NEW APPROACH TO ADDRESS EMERGENCY NEEDS

Ethiopia has engaged in two significant humanitarian reforms in the past month. It has changed the annual Humanitarian Appeal process and worked with humanitarian partners to introduce the Cluster Approach.

The shift in the Government humanitarian financing structures was noted on 12 February with the launch of the Joint Ethiopian Government and Humanitarian Partners Appeal. Historically, annual assessments were used to

identify populations in need of emergency food assistance. Based on the November and September *meher* assessment findings and predicted beneficiary figures, resources were allocated in advance to each woreda on a monthly basis.

The shift was initiated by the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Ato Adissu Legesse. This year *meher* assessment results will be used as a broad national estimate of emergency food aid needs for contingency planning and resource mobilisation. Actual allocations of relief resources, however, will be made based on more specific case-by-case, area-by-area assessments.

The traditional system which utilizes qualitative information including the performance of rainy seasons and other early warning indicators was criticized for being too much food focused and not accurately capturing needs. Moreover, the Annual Appeal has been 'emburdened' with the unmet needs of development particularly in the non-food sector.

In order to facilitate transition and ensure timely response, for 2007 the government may dispatch first round emergency food assistance without initial detailed verification to those in need determined from the annual *meher* assessment. Life-saving interventions therefore will not be disrupted. Assessments will be conducted as assistance is delivered.

Critical to the new financing mechanism is the development of new assessment methodologies. To undertake this work, the DPPA-led Early Warning Working Group (EWWG) has formed a Methodology Technical Group to develop tools,



indicators and clear methodologies to identify emergency needs. It has also established a Monitoring sub group for continued monitoring of emerging humanitarian crises.

Complimenting this new government initiative is the cluster approach due to be implemented in the country this year. The cluster approach is a new method of organizing international and national humanitarian actors to ensure better preparedness, greater accountability, stronger partnership, predictable leadership and greater capacity during an emergency. The approach aims to further support DPPA-led planning and response to humanitarian emergencies, and to support specific government led sectoral taskforces.

The cluster approach was endorsed by senior officials at the conclusion of a joint government and humanitarian partners' workshop on the cluster approach held in Addis Ababa on the 8th and 9th of March.

"As we know the humanitarian field in Ethiopia is transforming; however, it is important to know that whatever is being done, it is done with a deep understanding of the issues," said Ato Simon Mechale, Director General of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA), at the close the workshop.

"I hope this new approach will increase accountability and transparency among the humanitarian community and the government and help us better serve the people we are trying to assist" Ato Simon added.

Question and Answer Session with Ato Simon Mechale, Director General of the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency:

Q. How best can humanitarian partners support the DPPA in addressing the challenge of emergency response in Ethiopia?

A. I think humanitarian partners can help DPPA in addressing challenges by pledging adequate support as detailed in the 2007 Appeal. What is also important is that the humanitarian community share relevant information in a timely and concise manner and of course that they help us build the capacity of different partners either implementing or coordinating both at regional and federal levels. Through a greater partnership we can help to develop a more credible transparent system acceptable to all stakeholders as it is a joint responsibility.

Q. How critical is the new approach as outlined in the 2007 Joint Government and Humanitarian Partner Appeal in strengthening and improving humanitarian response?

A. There is no question that the new approach is critical to improving our response. It will ensure two important factors that have needed strengthening. Firstly, the approach will help us ensure that our response is based on need and secondly, it will ensure that no objective needs are left unaddressed.

Q. How important will the role of assessments be under the new Approach?

A. Assessments are an integral component of the new approach. More frequent case by case, area by area assessments will ensure more efficient use of humanitarian resources based on need. What is important is that we ensure that real needs are not left unaddressed as assessments are conducted. By doing so, our hope is that dependency syndrome will be reduced.

Q. How best can the Ethiopian Government make the transition to the new approach? How important is it for regional governments to support the effort?

A. Humanitarian partners have been talking about how the case by case reassessments could delay humanitarian response and lead some people to suffer; we must ensure that this is not the case. We can best make this transition with flexibility particularly when and if unexpected quick onset emergencies arise. While we acknowledge the need for case by case assessments, we intend to send assistance immediately to those affected by such emergencies. Assistance will be provided at the request of the regions and regions will be accountable for any unjustifiable requests. Case by case, area by area assessments will be conducted in immediate aftermath to verify requests but will not interfere with ensuring that those in need receive timely assistance. Other than such unexpected emergency situations, assessment teams will be deployed as quickly as possible after requests from the concerned regions are put forward.

What is important for donors and other humanitarian partners to remember is that the transition to contingency financing does not mean that needs will not arise and that they do not exist. More than ever, support to the Appeal is imperative to ensure that we meet the requirements of those that will be in need of assistance this year.

It is very important that the regions are on board. DPPA began this process with the regions after the launch of the Appeal where all regions participated in a meeting to share the message of the new approach. Regions have been asked to convey the same message to the lower levels of government, to the woredas. If needs be similar forums can be organized at this level. As mentioned earlier, what is most important is that we build the capacity of the regions in this regard. Regions have been informed that they can request assistance when they believe that there are objective needs.

The DPPA has also recently conducted a series of meetings with relevant line ministries to foster better understanding on what the new approach will entail both from the point of views of food and non-food components. We have agreed to organize meetings with corresponding bureaus – Health, Water and Agriculture at Federal level. Further information sharing meetings with UN, NGOs and Donors are also anticipated.



The Early Warning working group has been working to create better understanding and put in place a mechanism as to how to retake assessments based on area by area, case by case methodology. As we try to implement the new approach, we will definitely expect some challenges but we will take them as lessons learned as it is part of an ongoing process.

Q. What do you think the key benefit will be of the Cluster Approach in Ethiopia? What are the tasks that need to be taken in order to maximize those benefits?

A. As we all know, the Cluster Approach is a new ongoing process. It is dynamic, and open to change. I believe the key benefit of this approach will be that there are clear owners for all the main programme areas on both the UN and government sides.

I hope that it will bring more accountability to everyone – UN, NGOs and government and that it will help to bring about improvement on the efficiency of humanitarian resources thereby better serving beneficiaries that we are responsible to.

As to what are the tasks needed to maximize benefits, I would say that more regular consultations among partners are needed in particular to refine existing methodologies and procedures. Through clear lead agencies we will be able to refine our approaches.

Q. Do you think the Cluster Approach will be helpful in strengthening informational ties between the Ethiopian Government and other humanitarian actors?

A. I hope that the cluster approach will improve information sharing. Since Cluster leads are clearly defined we can approach that lead agency, for example the government can contact WFP for more information on logistics, Ministry of Water Resources can now approach UNICEF for WES issues or other cluster leads in their sectoral responsibilities. Information has been an area with serious challenges. Information is like the right weapon in a war, without it you cannot win, the lack can incapacitate you but with it you are enabled.

Finally, the Clusters will help avoid unnecessary duplication and will help us identify how best to effectively utilize resources that have been pledged.

SUMMARY OF THE 2007 JOINT GOVERNMENT AND HUMANITARIAN APPEAL

The 2007 Humanitarian Appeal focuses on life-saving and livelihoods protection activities in four key sectors: food; health and nutrition; water and environmental sanitation; and agriculture. In addition, the outstanding rehabilitation/recovery requirements to address the adverse impacts of the floods are incorporated.

Despite the improved food security prospects, an estimated 1.36 million people will require emergency food assistance, due to impacts of flooding, localized agricultural production failure and other shocks. The total emergency food required for the year is estimated to be 150,580 MT, of which 90,000 MT is considered to be carry-over pledges and stock from 2006, leaving a net requirement of 60,580 MT. Furthermore, approximately US\$ 128,944,676 is required to address non-food sector needs including flood rehabilitation/recovery gaps. Humanitarian assistance for both food and non-food needs for 2007 are estimated at US\$179,338,641.

As in previous years, response will give priority to addressing acute needs of vulnerable populations affected by natural disaster such as prolonged drought, flooding and other shocks, as well as by localized conflict. In Ethiopia, vulnerable segments of society that are in need of specific attention include women, children under-five, youth, adolescents, the elderly and emergency induced displacements. Mechanisms will be designed to address both food and non-food needs of these populations so as to support longer term development objectives of affected communities to the greatest extent possible. Furthermore, continued close monitoring is required in pastoral areas.

As noted above, while national estimates of people in need will be used for planning and resource mobilization, allocation of resources in 2007 will be undertaken based on area by area, case by case assessment results.

Sector	Gross Requirements (US\$)	Available Resources (US\$)	Net Requirements (US\$)
Food <i>Gross: 150,580 MT</i> <i>Net: 60,580</i>	82,066,100	49,050,000	33,016,100
Supplementary food component of the EOS/TSF: <i>Gross: 53,461 MT</i> <i>Net: 27,592 MT</i>	33,460,536	16,082,671	17,377,865
Food Sub-total	115,526,636	65,132,671	50,393,965
Health and Nutrition	83,771,508	0	83,771,508
Water and Sanitation	20,570,869	1,416,095	19,154,774
Agriculture	3,053,994	0	3,053,994
Flood Rehabilitation/Recovery	22,000,000	7,000,000	15,000,000
Disaster Preparedness and Response/ Capacity Strengthening	5,664,400	0	5,664,400
Overall Co-ordination	2,300,000	0	2,300,000
Non-food Sub-total	137,360,771	8,416,095	128,944,676
Grand Total	252,887,407	73,548,766	179,338,641



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

AFAR

Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) continued to be of major concern with reports of a high Case Fatality Rate (CFR). In addition, security remains unstable particularly along the border with Eritrea with increased reports of refugee influx. UNHCR estimates that 4,572 Eritrean refugees are in Afar Regional State including older caseloads reported from the 1998-2000 conflict and new arrivals.

Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA) have reported that asylum seekers are now registered in Abala, Berhale, Dubti, Assaita woredas and further registration is expected in Elidar woreda along the border with Eritrea in the coming weeks.

A Mult-Agency AWD support team that visited the region at the end of February reports that the AWD situation is very serious. According to the support team, AWD continues to spread particularly in Assaita and Afambo woredas of Zone1 and Gewane and Bure Mudaytu woredas of zone 3. Since September 2006, officially, 243 people have died and 6,300 cases have been reported in 16 woredas to date. New areas continue to be affected and the case fatality rate is particularly high when compared to other regions. As a recovery response to the AWD epidemic, the DPPA/WFP has dispatched 152 tonnes of supplementary food to Afambo and Assaita woredas of zone one and to Gewane, Amibara and Bure Mudaytu woredas of Zone 3.



Humanitarian actors assisting the Regional Health Bureau in its response include Oxfam/APDA, World Vision, MSF-France, CARE, ICRC and Farm Africa.

Challenges facing the response include logistical, financial, and human resource shortages. Potable water is a crucial problem exacerbating the caseload. In addition, there is inadequate information sharing and coordination between woredas. Social mobilization on the importance of good hygiene and sanitation is needed as is improved case management.

Due to favourable weather conditions in most parts of the region, pasture and forage conditions are generally sufficient for livestock. The *belg/sugum* rains commenced at the beginning of February in some woredas of Zone 2, 3

and 5. In northeastern parts of the region, however, the livestock situation in Assaita, Chifra and Elidar need close monitoring. Moreover, an outbreak of shoaat disease, killing 200 shoats, locally known as Gubulo or Agara in Mille woreda is of concern. Unconfirmed reports indicate that the outbreak could be caused by tree locust causing diarrhoea, weight loss and eventually death in shoats.

AMHARA

As the region continues its resettlement of chronically food insecure households, favourable and timely rains increase the prospect of a good harvest in other parts.

During the month, as part of the region's resettlement programme, 1900 households were relocated to Quara, Metema, Tach Armacho and Dangla resettlement sites from food insecure highland areas. The Region plans to settle at total of 15,000 households this year; Over 62,000 households have been resettled to these areas since 2003.

Since mid-January, timely *belg* rains commenced in four main *belg* producing areas of Amhara – North Shoa, South and North Wollo and Oromiya zones. The rains have created favourable crop conditions with approximately, 136,885 hectares of land planted so far out of the planned 223,382 ha. Although, crops are at an early stage of growth, the prospects for a successful harvest do not seem promising as there have been virtually no rains since the third dekad of February. Consequently, planting has been interrupted and *belg* crop seedlings are suffering from moisture stress especially in low and midlands areas. In general, conditions have also been conducive for livestock.

Meanwhile, the market price of stable food particularly *teff* showed a decreasing trend while the price of livestock remained stable.

AWD is reportedly contained in the region, following collaborated efforts by government and humanitarian partners except for Awabel woreda in East Gojam where incidence of AWD has been reported during the month.

DIRE DAWA

As rehabilitation and construction programmes are ongoing, those displaced by flooding in Dire Dawa are still in need of humanitarian assistance.

The Dire Dawa Disaster Prevention and Food Security Office (DPFSO) has distributed February's ration and has requested more for the coming months. Meanwhile, CARE in its February publication reports that the admission rate in all CTC sites has declined.

The construction of 200 small houses and 75 condominiums is underway by Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS) and the Regional Administrative Council respectively. This is in addition to 26 houses constructed by Ayat Construction Enterprise and 330 underway by Cooperating Housing Federation (CHF).

While the rainy season is looming and over 4,000 people still seeking shelter at the temporary resettlement site, the



DPFSO and the Regional Administrative Council are now considering other options for the displaced. One proposal includes providing financial support to enable IDPs to rent accommodation and resume their livelihoods independently of humanitarian assistance. In the meantime, IOM continue to support camp management.

GAMBELLA

Previously reported disease outbreaks including AWD and measles are now under control in Gambella Region. Ongoing peace building efforts continue to be thwarted by insecurity in the west.

The recent measles and AWD epidemic are now both under control; although there are fears that AWD could reemerge with the onset of the rains in April. In preparation, the Region has established an emergency Water and Sanitation Taskforce which meets on a monthly basis. In February the Taskforce in collaboration with MSF-Switzerland conducted training on case management in Gambella Hospital. Preventative and control interventions are underway including the enforcement of the use of latrines in public restaurants in Gambella town. UNICEF has also pre-positioned NFI's.

Security in the west of the region remains instable with frequent cattle raiding by the Murle from Sudan. The official disarmament of the Murle was completed on 14 February and there are ongoing cross border efforts to control the incursions. The situation, however, remains a challenge to humanitarian partners. Furthermore, a recent conflict on 2nd of March between the Murle tribe from the Sudan and Nuer tribe in the region has caused significant distress to the affected households. According to a recent rapid assessment report by the region the conflict has caused deaths of people and livestock, displacement of people, cattle looting and closure of some schools. The affected people are in immediate need of food including supplementary food, protection and non-food items.

Peace-building efforts are ongoing. In April, Athletic Resource Services International in collaboration with UNICEF and PACT are planning to hold a mini Olympics in Gambella for 250 children in order to facilitate inter community peace. In addition, leaders of the Lou and Jikany Nuer as well as other tribal groups plan to meet in March to continue a community driven peace initiative facilitated by the Government of Ethiopia, the Government of South Sudan, UN OCHA PCI, PACT and civil society organizations.

The UNHCR Sudanese repatriation programme resumed on 26 February, when the first convoy of 507 Uduk refugees departed from Bonga camp. Approximately 500-to-600 refugees are expected to be repatriated every week until the onset of the rainy season when roads become impassable.

OROMIYA

During the month the region experienced several humanitarian challenges, including the spread of AWD and clan conflicts.

A recent clan conflict in Borena zone between Borena and Gabra is reported to have caused displacement and mortalities. Although the scale of the damage has not yet been fully assessed, there is a need for continued close monitoring in order to address emerging humanitarian needs.

In addition to those recently displaced by conflict in Borena, displaced populations of humanitarian concern remain in Mieso, Karamile, East and West Hararghe zones. As well as short-term food and non-food humanitarian assistance, support is needed to enable these displaced to resume their livelihoods.



AWD continues to spread across the region with high cases being reported in Bale, Arsi and Borena zones. To date, the region reports the highest caseload in the country.

In addition, suspected cases of meningitis have also been reported from Galana woreda in Borena zone. To date, 63 suspected cases and five deaths have been reported and the samples have been sent for laboratory investigation. WHO is providing technical and financial support to FMOH for enhancing epidemiological and laboratory surveillance.

CARE in its February update reported that human health situation has improved in most of its reporting woredas in East Hararghe, West Hararghe, Borena and East Shewa zones. There has also been a decline in admission rates of malnutrition cases in all CTCs, including Grawa. The Moyale CTC program has phased out and is presently operating under close supervision of the woreda health office and CARE Borena field office. It also reported that through the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme, CSB and oil provided by WFP have been distributed for children under the age of five and pregnant and nursing women in East Hararghe reporting woredas.



Apart from scattered showers in pocket areas, the onset of *belg* rains in East Hararghe is reported to be late. Further delay is anticipated to affect the *belg* season production and land preparation for meher season crops. Meanwhile, water shortage has been reported in Darer Arba and Riski kebeles in Babile and Fedis woredas respectively. The food security situation in pockets areas of the zone continue to need close monitoring particularly in Chinaksen, a chronically food insecure woreda, where crop production was affected by excessive rain in 2006. *Belg* rains have, however, been reported in some areas of West Hararghe zones initiating farm land preparation for planting. The dispatches of the 5,480 tonnes of various food commodities allocated in December have been finalized.

CARE reported that grains and livestock prices have remained high despite the peak harvest season in most of the reporting woredas in East and West Hararghe, Borena and East Shewa zones. The price of chat, which declined significantly due to low demand from the present security situation in Somalia, has started to show an increasing trend.

There are no reports of major animal disease outbreaks in the region, apart from reports of unusually high levels of animal abortion in Dillo, Dire, and Watawondo, and Teltele woredas of Borena zone. According to CARE, tests are being undertaken in Assela Laboratory to determine the cause of the abortions.

SOMALI

The food security situation in Somali Region is normal. Improved pasture and water availability have contributed to better livestock conditions. The alarming spread of AWD has, however, been a challenge to the humanitarian community.

Localized rains were received in some parts of the region, including Shinille and Jijiga zones. Concerns persist that water could be depleted early in pocket areas of Hudet and Filtu woredas, Liben zone.



The physical condition of livestock is reported to be normal with no reports of abnormal livestock migration during the month. Apart from continued accounts of an unknown

camel disease in areas of Afder and Liben zones, no major outbreak of livestock disease has been reported. PACE and SC US have undertaken interventions to control camel disease in Afder zone and Dolo Odo woreda, Liben zone. Similar interventions are required in Moyale and Hudet woredas.

Prices of cereal and livestock have declined significantly in most markets during the month. The decline in livestock price mainly of camels and cattle is due to restrictions declared by some Arab countries. There is concern that the ban could significantly impact on livelihoods of pastoral communities. Cereal prices have also decreased in most markets due to the good harvest.

AWD is of major concern in the region with reports of an internationally unacceptable case fatality rate in some woredas. The disease, which was previously confined to Shebelle basin areas, has changed its route affecting Kebridehar woreda, Koraha zone. It is also threatening Warder, Fik and Degehabur zones. Absence of clean water supply and poor health and sanitation services has exacerbated the outbreak. The Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) stationed a team in Kebridehar hospital for one month. The Regional Health Bureau (RHB) has supplied basic drugs and fluids to the affected areas. ACF has also assisted with the provision of three water bladders containing 10,000 liters each. In addition, the RHB in collaboration with UNICEF and the regional WASH taskforce will conduct a training focusing on sanitation and hygiene; water quality; and case management.

The situation of IDPs in Hartishek and Fafen camps remains of concern as no food distribution has occurred since October 2006. Latest information indicates that 60 tonnes of grains, six tonnes of pulses and 1.8 tonnes of oil from DPPA/WFP will be distributed to the IDPs in Hartishek camp during the first week of March.

The dispatches of the 26,720 tonnes of food commodities allocated in December have been finalized and the region has submitted a food request for February.

Disaster Prevention and preparedness and Food Security Bureau Somali National Regional State in its latest February publication reported that clan conflicts initiated by land ownership claims and camels lootings have killed many people in Degehabur and Liben zones.

Increased numbers of asylum seekers from Somalia have been reported in Somali Regional State, according to unconfirmed reports from regional officials. In response, UNHCR in collaboration with government is considering both refugee camp support and community based programming in order to address their humanitarian needs. The refugees are located in Gode, Afder, Liben and Warder zones.



SNNP

AWD remains to be of concern in the region despite preventive and case management interventions by various actors.

Agro-pastoralists in South Omo zone have started harvesting sorghum from flood recession fields. Despite improving crop and livestock condition, however, flood induced IDPs continue to need support including restocking of livestock and development of infrastructure such as roads, school, clinics and health centers.

Resettlement programmes are ongoing from Hadiya zone, a severely overpopulated area with a crude population density of 357 persons per square kilometer to Modi resettlement site, Esera woreda of Dawro zone. In February, 750 people were relocated. In addition, 1,399 people were moved from Kembata Special Woreda to Keffa zone.

A malaria outbreak was reported in Kuju kebele of Menet Shasha woreda in Bench Maji zone during the month. Inaccessibility is a major challenge in addressing the outbreak. Meanwhile, distribution of ITNs is on-going in the region.

AWD continues to spread to new woredas in the region during the month. Aleta Wondo woreda in Sidama and Wonago woreda in Gedio zone have reported incidences of AWD.

During the month, the Federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) dispatched 512 tonnes of various food commodities to 27,580 conflict induced IDPs in Amaro and Burji special woredas.

TIGRAY

Although the main *belg* season is expected in the coming two months, most of the *belg* producing areas especially in the lowlands have reported irregular and erratic rains during the month. Both the coverage of *belg* crops and the performance of the crops are reported to be satisfactory in the high-lying areas and below average in the lowlands. As a result, most woredas have started land preparation earlier than usual. Moreover, Ofla woreda in Southern zone have started seed plantation. There are no reports of major human and livestock disease outbreaks.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS

In Addis Ababa

March 15	Technical and Monitoring sub group meeting, DPPA, 2:30 p.m. (Invitation only)
March 16, 23, 30	UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30 a.m. (Open to all)
March 20	Water and Environmental Sanitation Task Force Meeting, MoWR, 10:00 a.m. (Open to all)
March 28	MANT (Multi-Agency Nutrition Task Force) Meeting, DPPA, 02:00p.m. (Open to all)
March 26	Strategic Disaster Management Team Meeting, 09:00 a.m., TBC (UN internal only)
March 29	Technical Information Management Exchange meeting, DPPA Conference room, 10:00 a.m., TBC (Open to all)