



FOOD SECURITY UPDATE

The impact of the rains to date has been limited in Somali, SNNP, Oromiya, Amhara and Tigray regions. In the *belg* producing areas, approximately 80 percent of the farmers are switching to plantation of early maturing crops as most have lost the chance to plant long cycle crops due to the delay and poor performance of the *belg* rains. The soaring price of fertilizer from 400 birr to 800 in SNNPR is anticipated to further affect production. Food prices have continued to increase with reports of alarming hike of the price of the cheapest grain, maize, in some markets of Somali Region to have reached 700 birr per quintal from about 350 birr per quintal.

In SNNPR the emergency beneficiary figure has been revised from 500,000 people to more than one million. DPPA has allocated one month emergency food for 1.06 million beneficiaries. The food security situation is further worsened as the only root crop available for consumption (*enset*) has been affected by disease. Case Treatment Centers are overwhelmed and do not have adequate resources to cope with the increased admission rates. Sweet potato cuttings have been identified as the most pressing requirement in the region.

Severe water and pasture shortages persist in Warder and Korahe zones of Somali Region. A recent FAO assessment reported increased livestock mortality among shoats, camels and cattle in these zones. High concentration of livestock is also reported in areas where rain has been received, contributing to over-grazing of the limited browse and pasture. The Regional Health Bureau (RHB), DPPB, UNICEF and WFP conducted joint nutrition surveys in Warder woreda in Warder zone and Dihun and Garbo woredas in Fik zone.

An alarming food security situation with severe malnutrition has been reported in Siraro woreda of West Arsi zone, Oromiya Region. Out-patient Therapeutic Programme (OTP) and Therapeutic Feeding Centers (TFC) have provided treatment for 1,800 severely malnourished children. DPPA has deployed a rapid verification assessment mission to the woreda on 7th May. Malnutrition prevalence is becoming high in Bedeno, Midhega Tola, Kurfa Chelle, Fedis, and Babile woredas of East Hararge zone. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org & wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

ACUTE WATERY DIARRHEA UPDATE

An Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) outbreak has re-emerged in Oromiya and Amhara regions. The Oromiya Regional Health Bureau (RHB) has reported AWD cases in Munesa woreda of Arsi zone; Arsi Negele woreda of West Arsi zone and Nonno woreda of West Showa zone. The first case was reported on 14 April 2008. A joint RHB and WHO verification team has been deployed to the affected areas. Suspected AWD cases are also reported from Dera woreda in South Gondar zone; Denbecha woreda of West Gojam zone and Ankesha woreda of Awi zone in Amhara Region. Improved preparedness, increased awareness among communities and trained personnel have significantly contributed to a better response this year. Coordination forums in the affected areas have been reactivated at zonal and woreda levels. In addition, proper case management, surveillance and community education are underway. The Oromiya RHB is distributing water purification chemicals to the affected community. Operation costs have been identified as an outstanding gap in the region. For more information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int

HEALTH HAZARDS: MALARIA, MENINGITIS AND MEASLES

Increased malaria cases have been reported in Boricha woreda of Sidama zone and Damot Gale and Bolosore woredas in Welayita zone of SNNPR. Out of 250 suspected cases, 187 have been confirmed with laboratory investigations. Shortage of drugs and health staff has reportedly contributed to the elevated number of cases.

Meningitis cases also continue to be reported. Last week seven new cases were reported from Liben and Bore woredas in Oromiya Region. As of the last week of April, a total of 421 cases and 16 deaths with Case Fatality Rate of 3.8 percent have been reported from 41 woredas in five regions. Bore woreda in Guji zone (Oromiya) and Aleta Wendo and Dara woredas in Sidama zone (SNNPR) have reached the alert threshold level; while sporadic cases are reported from the remaining woredas. Prevention vaccination campaigns are ongoing. To date, a total of 411,918 people have been vaccinated. The Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) plans to utilize the entire 689,500 doses of vaccines available in the country that expires on 31 May. CIDA has granted US\$ 4 million and DFID provided approximately US\$ 2 million to WHO against the meningococcal Meningitis Appeal issued by the FMoH. The fund will be used for the procurement of vaccines, drugs and medical and laboratory supplies as well as to cover operational cost for mass vaccination.

Meanwhile, reports of measles cases have declined nationwide. No case was reported during the week. Surveillance has been strengthened in high risk areas. Preparation for vaccination campaign in SNNP and Oromiya regions are underway. For more information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int

UNHCR CLOSES TWO REFUGEE CAMPS

UNHCR closed two out of four refugee camps in western Ethiopia hosting refugees from southern Sudan, following a repatriation of approximately 23,000 refugees. The closure of Bonga and Dimma camps brings the total number of camps emptied in western part of the country to three since last year. Approximately 28,000 Sudanese refugees have returned to their homes since the repatriation exercise began two years ago. UNHCR is temporarily suspending the repatriation activity during the rainy season when roads become impassable. Contact: Gegeziabk@unhcr.org