



FOOD SECURITY UPDATE

The food security situation in the drought affected areas of Oromiya, Somali and SNNPR is anticipated to further deteriorate as the hunger season sets in June combined with the alarming increase in prices of food commodities and market disruption. Emergency resource shortages further exacerbate the situation.

Food insecurity is also reported in the highlands of Bale, East Hararghe and West Arsi zones of **Oromiya Region**. Increased cases of malnutrition are being reported from Dinsho, Meda Welabu, Sinana and Delo Mena woredas in Bale zone; Kersa and Goro Gutu woredas in East Hararghe zone and Gedab Assasa, Kofele and Adaba woredas in West Arsi zone. The Multi Agency Nutrition Taskforce convened an extra-ordinary meeting on 22nd May to facilitate rapid assessments and coordinate response in the zones. CARE in its latest publication highlighted that despite the rains, a shortage of pasture remains in Fentale, Borena and lowlands of East and West Hararghe zones. Army worm and locust infestations have been reported in Borena, Bale and Guji zones further affecting the newly shooting grass and some farm lands.

Although the performance of the rains has improved in some parts of **Somali Region** during the last ten days, the livelihoods of pastoralists are still at risk. This is due to cumulative effects of repeated shocks (drought and floods) combined with a significant decline of the purchasing power of pastoralists. The rains were not uniformly distributed across the region and were particularly erratic in Shilabo, Mustahil, Ferfer, Kelafo, Aysha, Afdem, Geladi, Bok, Warder, Bare and Hargele woredas. Malnutrition continues to be a serious problem in the region. Livestock production and condition is yet to recover from the impact of the drought. Internal livestock migration persists. Additionally, approximately 12,000 Somalia asylum seekers have reportedly crossed into the country near Jijiga zone. UNHCR and the Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs are screening to determine refugee status.

In **SNNPR** the livelihood of communities is highly threatened as the major root crop, *Enset*, has been severely depleted due to the drought, excessive consumption and diseases. Severe and acute malnutrition reports continue, further stretching the limited capacity of treatment centers. The Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit reports more than 7,800 admissions in community therapeutic care centers. Meanwhile, in **Afar Region**, severe water shortage persists in Elidar, Kori, Bidu and Erebtu woredas. The Government is providing water trucking interventions in Elidar, Kori and Bidu starting from 3rd of April.

WFP is highly concerned about the limited availability of food in country particularly cereals and blended food for relief and Supplementary Food for Therapeutic Supplementary Feeding (TSF) programmes. The shortfall for blended food amounts over 38,000 MTs, considering estimated needs until December 2008. The situation is particularly worrying as the number of children being admitted to therapeutic feeding centers is increasing whereas the local capacity to respond and the specialized food needed for treatment of severely malnourished children are inadequate to face the rising numbers. Meanwhile, the attempt to prioritize available relief blended food for woredas most affected by malnutrition is becoming extremely difficult given the pervasive high needs. Local suppliers of Famix (blended food) are faced with various constraints to raise their capacity of production including ongoing power cuts, Government fiscal policy to reduce bank loans and price increase for raw materials.

WFP is providing technical assistance to the Government to procure 80,000 MTs of maize from South Africa. The procurement process is expected to start shortly with a tender for a first consignment of 20,000 MTsw. The United States has donated 1,200 MTs of CSB and 500 MTs of vegetable oil for relief interventions. Meanwhile, WFP reports that a total of 34,524 MTs of food has been allocated to beneficiaries in Afar, Oromiya, SNNP, Amhara, Beneshangul Gumuz, Gambella and Tigray regions. For Somali Region, more than 27,000 MTs of food has been allocated to 956,070 beneficiaries during January to April 2008, out of which 17,922 MTs has been dispatched. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org, care.eth@ethionet.et & wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

RAINS TO INCREASE AWD OUTBREAKS

With the onset of the rains in most parts of the country, UNICEF reports that the threat of water related diseases such as Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) has substantially increased. Out of the eight woredas affected by AWD epidemic in Amhara, Oromiya and SNNP; six woredas are reporting active cases: Ankesha woreda of Amhara; Munesa, Arsi Negelle, Nono and Hamaya woredas of Oromiya; Abashange woreda of SNNPR. WHO assigned two experts to support the response in the three regions, in addition to the existing surveillance officers. Responding to AWD cases reported in five woredas of Amhara and Oromiya, UNICEF supplied 12 Community Treatment Center (CTC) kits, each containing water treatment chemicals and medicines for ten hospital beds. Zonal Health Departments and woreda Health Offices are establishing sanitation facilities in these locations. In Amhara, WHO and PSI are dispatching water treatment chemicals. Additionally, WHO disseminated Information Education and Communication materials and CTC kits. Public awareness and community mobilization activities are also underway. In Oromiya however, available water treatment chemicals have expired. PSI plans to distribute chemicals to the lowest administrative levels to ensure effective distribution.

The current funding requirement for the WASH sector is estimated at US\$ 15 million. Currently an estimated 300,000 people in Somali Region need immediate water supply and sanitation interventions, together with additional funds to improve access to safe water in SNNPR and Afar. For more information contact: kmcdonald@unicef.org & who-wro@et.afro.who.int

HRF ALLOCATES US\$ 13 MILLION FOR DROUGHT RESPONSE

In response to the drought emergency, the Humanitarian Response Fund has allocated US\$ 7.2 million to WFP and UNICEF for procurement of CSB, Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods and drugs to respond to the present alarming levels of malnutrition. The fund has already provided US\$ 5.5 million for water and livestock interventions in Borena and Guji zones of Oromiya and parts of Somali regions. The HRF is also reviewing additional project applications from NGOs responding to the nutrition and seed requirements in SNNP and Oromiya regions. The programme has received US\$ 13 million from the Governments of Norway, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org