



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

# Situation Report: Drought/Food Crisis in Ethiopia

28<sup>th</sup> July 2008

## Highlights:

- **Malnutrition rates continue to rise with no sign of stabilisation**
- **Reports indicate the geographic scope of the crisis is widening to include Afar**
- **UNICEF requests the Government to grant a blanket tax exemption of emergency therapeutic feeding supplies until the end of 2008.**

## Humanitarian Overview

### Current Context

The humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia continues to escalate despite the concerted efforts of the government and the humanitarian community to respond to the needs of affected communities. The current crisis, manifest in acute food insecurity and accelerating rates of malnutrition, is a product of the interaction of a number of factors including; drought, a sharp increase in market prices and crop failure. The immediate impact upon communities in drought-affected regions of the country is reduced access to food and water, erosion of livelihoods and heightened vulnerability to malnutrition especially among children.

Humanitarian partners have been responding to the treatment needs of children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in SNNPR and Oromiya since the outset of the crisis. Reports indicate that the geographic scope of the crisis has expanded to encompass communities in Afar, Amhara and Somali Regions. The humanitarian community continues to grapple with serious shortfalls in commodities essential to deliver much-needed emergency relief. Due to logistical challenges and breaks in the food pipeline the shipments of food scheduled to arrive in July and August will not be sufficient to respond to the needs of people affected by the crisis. Food baskets have been reduced for July distributions as a result of shortfalls.

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The DPPA have completed the *belg* assessment process<sup>1</sup> and early indications are that more people will require additional support over the next six months due to continued food insecurity. Initial findings indicate critical food security problems in Afar, Amhara, Tigray and Somali Regions. Teams charged with conducting an assessment of food security in Oromiya and SNNPR are due to debrief partners on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

Government and humanitarian partners have been working to find ways to strengthen the capacity of the humanitarian community to respond to the crisis in Ethiopia. Food distributions, securing quick release of essential humanitarian commodities from customs and enhanced response in the Somali Region have been among the core issues tackled by government and partners during the course of the week.

The Somali Region Special Committee, led by the Director General of DPPA and the Humanitarian Coordinator, will meet on a weekly basis to facilitate a strengthened response to the crisis in the Somali Region. The Special Committee met with 13 NGOs on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July to discuss options to scale up humanitarian interventions in the region and is lobbying for clearance of additional NGOs to intervene in areas affected by the crisis. The Special Committee is working in tandem with technical task forces to develop coordinated plans of action in the health and nutrition, water and sanitation and agriculture and livestock sectors.

## Sectoral Updates

### Health and Nutrition

#### Key Issues

**Overview:** The number of children requiring immediate live-saving nutritional care continues to rise in drought-affected regions of the country. The Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) reports that nearly 20,000 children are receiving treatment in CTCs for SAM in SNNPR alone. According to the ENCU, the situation shows no sign of stabilisation with increased prevalence of malnutrition in SNNPR and Oromiya. Humanitarian partners have observed a

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the *belg* assessment is to assess the food security situation in the country and review the number of emergency beneficiaries who will require additional food assistance in the coming six months.

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number of worrying trends including growing number of adults and adolescents suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition and re-admission of children to CTC (OTP/SC).

In order to expedite the delivery of emergency nutrition assistance, UNICEF has requested the government to grant a blanket tax exemption for emergency therapeutic feeding supplies till the end of the year. UNICEF reports that the last four shipments (362.8 mt net) of Plumpy'Nut remain in customs in Bole Airport. UNICEF is working with Government to find solutions to ensure the quick release of the RUTF from customs.

**Afar and Amhara:** ENCU has received alarming indications of malnutrition among children in Afar. Levels of moderate acute malnutrition are rising in Amhara and humanitarian partners anticipate a rise in cases of SAM in the weeks ahead. There are a limited number of humanitarian actors in Afar and capacity to assess and respond to the needs of affected communities will be limited without a rapid influx of actors into the region. The DPPB/FSB and RENCU have classified woredas in Amhara Region according to severity of food security situation and, where possible, nutrition status. The most recent information indicates that the situation in 16 woredas is critical while 26 require close monitoring in the coming weeks. The Regional Health Bureau (RHB), DPPB and Regional Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (RENCU) and partners are planning to conduct assessments to determine the scale and severity of the nutrition problem in the worst affected woredas.

**Oromiya:** According to the Regional Health Bureau in Oromiya, feeding centres in seventeen woredas report increased number of new admissions. A recent assessment mission carried out by WHO in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe and Hareri in Oromiya highlighted worrying trend of re-admission of children to therapeutic feeding centres. The findings of the report have not yet been confirmed by the ENCU. The high re-admission rate underscores the need to ensure that children graduating from treatment centres receive a sufficient ration of food to safeguard their nutritional status upon their return home.

### Response

**General:** UNICEF has ordered a new batch of therapeutic food including 679 mt of Plumpy'nut, 50 mt of F100 therapeutic milk and 159 mt of BP100 and expects the next shipment to arrive in-country on the 28<sup>th</sup> July with the second scheduled to arrive on the 4<sup>th</sup> August. UNICEF resourced the new supplies with the help of a new loan from UNICEF Headquarters.

The training of Health Extension Workers (HEWs) is underway. UNICEF reports that 75 trainers in 34 woredas in Oromiya have been trained over the past week. The training of HEWs to work in West Arsi has commenced and the remaining HEWs for Oromiya will receive training in the

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coming weeks. According to UNICEF, 113 trainers in 52 hotspot woredas in SNNPR have received training with the support of CONCERN, IMC, SCUK and WHO. The training of HEWs in SNNPR is scheduled to take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

**Amhara:** CONCERN and SCUK have agreed to support the DPPB/RHB and RENCU to conduct additional rapid nutrition assessments in the worst affected woredas in Amhara Region. Concern plans to upscale support to the national CTC programme in Werabbu, South Wollo.

**Oromiya:** WHO deployed a team to Dire Dawa, Hareri Region and East Hararghe Zone in Oromiya Region to assess the health and nutrition status and evaluate the capacity to respond to the crisis. In response to a request from the Somali Health Bureau, WHO has deployed two medical officers to Jijiga to support analysis of health and nutrition in the region.

**SNNPR:** New interventions have been established in the following areas: Chenchu and Dita woredas, Gamo Gofa Zone in SNNPR (MSF-H), Duna woreda, Hadiya Zone in SNNPR (MSF-H) and Kindo Didaye, Wolayta Zone in SNNPR (MSF-B). CONCERN plans to scale up support to the national CTC programme in Soro, Hadiya Zone. A number of humanitarian partners will conduct rapid assessments in the coming days in the following locations: Gombora woreda, Hadiya Zone (MSF-H), Gumer woreda, Gurage (SCUK), Arba Minch (SCUK) and Kucha woreda, Gamo Gofa Zone (SAMARITANS PURSE). The Regional Emergency Coordination forum continues to meet on a weekly basis under the chairmanship of the Regional Health Bureau.

### **Gaps and Requirements**

Humanitarian partners require additional support from government to facilitate quick release of essential emergency relief commodities, including Plumpy'nut, from customs. Full nutritional surveys are required as a matter of urgency to establish the scale and severity of malnutrition in Afar and Amhara regions. ENCU is calling for humanitarian partners to carry out full nutritional surveys in priority areas as follows: Elidar (Zone 1), Eribti, Kunaba and Kori (Zone 2), Gewane (Zone 3), Teru and Aura (Zone 4) and Dubi in the north.

### **Food Aid**

#### **Key Issues**

WFP is critically short of resources for 2008 requirements. The relief and PSNP pipelines have already broken. According to WFP, some cereals and blended food shipments are expected to arrive during July to August 2008 but these are insufficient to meet requirements for all targeted

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beneficiaries. The size of the pipeline break will widen if more relief food beneficiaries are added after the belg assessment.

On 18 July 2008, the Government agreed to the proposal submitted by the technical committee composed of WFP, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA), the Food Security Coordination Bureau (FSCB) and donors concerning the prioritization of July 2008 relief and Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) allocations. The entire planned relief caseload of 4.6 million beneficiaries will receive 10 kg of cereals. In addition, some 2.6 million of these relief beneficiaries who are located in priority one hotspot areas will also receive non-cereal commodities of 1 kg of pulses and 0.3 kg of oil; and a further amount of 3 kg of corn-soya blend (CSB) will be distributed to 35 percent of these beneficiaries<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, some 2.79 million PSNP beneficiaries located in priority one hotspot areas, who need food assistance as a result of severe drought in their areas, will be provided with the same reduced food basket of 10 kg of cereals, 1 kg of pulses and 0.3 kg of oil, including 3 kg of CSB for 35 percent of these PSNP beneficiaries.

The UNICEF/WFP Emergency Nutrition Response Plan to coordinate efforts of both agencies for the drought-affected areas has been finalized. The two agencies have provisionally agreed on ad hoc screening in some 46 woredas in priority one hotspot areas in Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR, which were previously part of the TSF programme (but which were put on hold in February 2008 due to lack of resources). This will be followed with a three-month TSF response (considering limited resources available).

### **Response**

To date during January to June 2008, an amount of 34,768 mt has been allocated to 1,025,030 beneficiaries in the Somali Region. Some 30,007 mt have been dispatched from this allocation. In SNNPR to date, during January to June 200, a total of 58,903 mt has been allocated to 1,314,380 beneficiaries. Some 51,205 mt have been dispatched from the warehouse. In Oromiya, a total of 22,705 mt has been allocated to 858,540 beneficiaries and some 16,577 mt have been dispatched. To date, during January to June 2008, a total of 17,517 mt has been allocated to some 845,091 beneficiaries in the regions of Afar, Amhara, Benshangul Gumuz, Gambella and Tigray, and a total of 9,817 mt has been dispatched to these areas.

WFP's vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit is partnering with the Government's Central Statistical Agency and the Ethiopian Development Research Institute as well as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the World Bank (WB), UNICEF and WHO

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<sup>2</sup> That is CSB will be distributed to 35 percent of 2.6 million relief beneficiaries.

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in conducting the urban vulnerability survey. Data collection has been completed and the data collection is scheduled to commence on the 25 July 2008. The survey is designed to establish the impact of the food crisis upon the urban poor.

### Gaps and Requirements

The total 2008 shortfall for relief, PSNP and TSF programmes amounts to 238,000 mt (valued at US\$195 million).

**Relief:** Total annual requirements for 4.6 million beneficiaries amount to 591,333 mt<sup>3</sup> of mixed commodities. Considering available resources, the current WFP shortfall against the national relief pipeline amounts to 153,000 mt (valued at US\$124 million).

**Productive Safety Net Programme:** WFP shortfalls for the PSNP amount to 68,000 mt of cereals (valued at US\$54 million).

**Targeted Supplementary Feeding:** WFP reports a current shortfall amounting to 17,000 mt (valued at US\$17 million).

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

#### Key Issues

Chronic water shortages and Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) continue to pose major challenges to the WASH sector. The poor performance of the seasonal rains has significantly reduced access to safe, clean drinking water in drought-affected regions. The scarcity of water is posing a considerable challenge to partners treating malnutrition as safe, clean drinking water and access to sanitation services are crucial components of the overall delivery of nutrition services.

WHO report confirmed cases of AWD in five woredas in Amhara Region (Takusa, Conjie, N. Chefer, Ankesha and Denbecha) and one woreda in Oromiya Region (Akaki) with unconfirmed reports of cases in Somali Region. AWD poses a considerable threat to the health status of already vulnerable groups, including children, who are suffering from malnutrition.

#### Response

Humanitarian partners continue to provide critical support to communities affected by acute water shortages in the form of emergency water tankering, rehabilitation of existing water

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<sup>3</sup> WFP will cover 80 percent of these requirements or some 473,066 mt of food (under the relief component of PRRO 10665.0).

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services and construction of new water services to strengthen the resilience of communities to future shocks.

The WASH taskforce is prioritising the distribution of water guard, pre-positioning of chemicals for water purification and EMWAT kits. In addition to these activities, WASH partners are working to strengthen surveillance and reporting mechanisms to trigger a rapid and coordinated response to confirmed cases of AWD. Partners have been requested to report suspected cases of AWD to the Federal Ministry of Health.

Multi-agency teams are following up on reports of AWD outbreaks to trigger a response including treatment affected groups and containment. Teams comprised of officials from the Federal Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water Resources, WHO and UNICEF, travelled to Tigray to assess reports of bloody diarrhea and are assessing reports of AWD in West Gojam Zone, Amhara Region. UNICEF, WHO and the Regional Health Bureau are investigating reports of AWD outbreak in Akaki woreda, Bale Zone in Oromiya Region. WHO has assigned an environmental expert to provide support to prevention of AWD in Amhara Region.

The Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) encourages NGO partners to submit proposals for WASH interventions as part of a multi-sector response to the food security and drought crisis. HRF has allocated US\$ 3 million to resource additional interventions responding to priority issues in the WASH sector.

### **Gaps and Requirements**

Many people living in drought-affected regions do not have guaranteed access to safe, clean drinking water. Emergency water tankering interventions need to be scaled up in the Somali Region to ensure that people have access to water to meet basic health and sanitation needs. WASH partners continue to face critical shortfalls in supplies of water guard and water treatment chemicals. The WASH Taskforce is facilitating improved information-sharing between partners but continues to press for strengthened surveillance capacity to enhance the overall response.

### **Agriculture and Livestock**

#### **Key Issues**

As humanitarian partners struggle to respond to the impact of drought and food insecurity upon human health, the crisis is eroding livelihoods of agro-pastoralists and depleting the assets of pastoralist communities. Partners working in the agriculture and livestock sector continue to press for interventions to promote early recovery of livelihoods and immediate scale-up of critically needed animal health services.

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### Response

FAO has completed procurement of seeds for distribution in SNNPR and has delivered 30% of the planting seed and equipment to date. In Oromiya Region, 37% of the seed has been delivered to beneficiaries and the remaining seeds will be distributed following finalization of procurement and agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding. FAO has begun the tendering process for procurement of seeds for distribution in Amhara Region. In addition to seed interventions, FAO is supporting animal health interventions in Borena and Guji Zones.

### Gaps and Requirements

Although animal feed remains a major requirement little can be done in the short run, because of the lack of feed resources in the country. The immediate focus advocated by FAO is commercial and slaughter de-stocking, in order to safeguard as much of water and rangeland resources for the core breeding stock.

## Humanitarian Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting	Location and Time
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	Oromiya Regional Emergency Nutrition, Health & Food Security Task Force Meeting	Oromiya DPP and Food Security Commission Office, Addis Ababa, 10.00.
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	<i>Belg</i> Debriefing, Oromiya and SNNPR	DPPA, 09.00.
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	Special Committee on the Somali Region	DPPA, 10.00. Invitation Only.
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2008	Humanitarian Coordination Meeting	UNDP Conference Hall, ECA 10.00
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2008	Safety and Security Meeting	UN Department of Safety and Security Office, 09.30.

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#### **Editorial Note:**

The information in this document is based on reports and field information from a variety of sources including UN agencies, NGOs and government partners as well as the different coordination forums.