



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Situation Report: Drought/Food Crisis in Ethiopia

20th October 2008

Highlights:

- Revised Humanitarian Requirements document calls for food and non-food requirements amounting to US\$ 265 million
- 6.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance -- one million are children under the age of five
- 137,500 children treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) since the onset of the crisis in April
- Children living in 44% of hotspot woredas have no access to live-saving treatment for SAM.

Humanitarian Overview

Current Context

On the 14th October the government launched the revised Humanitarian Requirements document outlining the number of people in need of emergency assistance and resources required to mount an effective response to the crisis. The number of people in need has risen almost three-fold since the initial estimation of needs in April 2008 to 6.4 million beneficiaries. The total food and non-food requirement amounts to some US\$265 million to cover the period from September to December 2008. Emergency food aid forms the bulk of the total requirements with the net food requirement estimated to be 270,245 mt amounting to some US\$218 million. In addition to food requirements, an estimated US\$ 39 million dollars is needed to cover a range of needs generated by the crisis in the health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene and agriculture and livestock sectors. Government, UN and NGOs are urging members of the donor community to commit additional resources as soon as possible to avert a further escalation of the existing crisis.

Whilst humanitarian partners welcome the issuance of the revised Humanitarian Requirements document there are growing concerns about how to respond to needs that are not formally captured in the existing document. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in Afar Region and reports indicate that nutrition status, particularly of children,

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

and livelihoods are at risk. The revised Humanitarian Requirements document does not identify any beneficiaries for emergency food relief in Afar and there is serious concern about how to guarantee assistance to vulnerable groups in the region. The needs of people living in Afar are intended to be covered under the auspices of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), however, the final allocation of PSNP cash and food transfers is scheduled to take place this month. Humanitarian partners are urging the government to ensure that the situation does not deteriorate further and stand ready to support the delivery of much needed assistance to those in need.

According to analysis by the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU), an estimated one million of the total 6.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance are children under the age of five years. The government and humanitarian partners are mounting one of the largest humanitarian responses to severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and have treated 137,500 children since the onset of the crisis in April. ENCU estimates that the current treatment capacity for SAM is 65,000 children per month, however, projections indicate that 82,400 children under the age of five will need to access treatment each month. There has been a significant increase in the number of therapeutic feeding sites as a direct result of the crisis with number of sites growing from less than 200 to 1200 sites. However, the programme coverage in the six regions remains low and children in 44% of the formally endorsed hotspot areas have no access to life-saving treatment for SAM.

In addition to the impact of the crisis upon nutrition, partners are increasingly concerned about the longer-term implications for education. Anecdotal reports indicate that school dropout rates and school closures increased as a direct result of the drought and food crisis. The Education Cluster, composed of representatives from the Ministry of Education, UN Agencies and NGOs, is examining existing capacity within the sector and is evaluating strategies to ensure that access to education is scaled-up during the emergency so as to safeguard long-term future of the children affected by the crisis.

Sectoral Updates

Health and Nutrition

Nutrition:

The current nutrition situation is graded as serious and critical and the prevalence of SAM ranges from 2.0 to 4.5 percent based on standard nutrition surveys conducted in Afar, Oromiya and SNNPR in August and September¹.

SNNPR: Therapeutic Feeding Programmes for children with SAM have been established in all of the officially endorsed 54 hotspot woredas. However, eighteen of the total number of hotspot woredas have not Targeted Supplementary Feeding programme critical for the management of moderate acute malnutrition and to prevent relapse of children already treated for SAM. Due to a change in reporting arrangements no comprehensive report is available for the region this week, however, a total of 37,000 children with SAM have been admitted for treatment during the period 25th June to 2nd October according to data compiled by the ENCU. A nutrition survey is ongoing in Boleso Sore woreda in while surveys have just been completed in Offa, Damote, Wadye and Dugna Fango in Wolayta Zone. Rapid assessments are planned for Gumbula and Isia woredas in Gurage Zone.

Oromiya: The new list of hotspot woredas has yet to be endorsed. The coverage of both Therapeutic and Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programmes remains low. 1, 139 new admissions of children with SAM have been reported between the 2nd and 8th October based on reports received from 216 out of 389 Out-patient Treatment sites (OTPs) and 34 out of 55 Inpatient Therapeutic Feeding Units (TFUs). Sheshemane woreda in West Arsi Zone continues to report the highest number of new admissions in the region.

Amhara: DPP have endorsed a list of 22 hotspot woredas in the region. The coverage of therapeutic feeding programmes remains low and children living in 16 out of 22 hotspots have no access to life-saving treatment for SAM. The report rate is improving and reports are currently flowing to ENCU from 18 out of 54 OTPs and two out of 10 TFUs. ENCU is supporting an enhanced structure for information flow and improved report rates are expected in the coming weeks.

Afar: Seven out of 12 hotspot woredas have no thereapeutic feeding programmes whilst five are without treatment programmes for either children with severe or moderate acute

¹ Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

malnutrition or moderately malnourished pregnant and nursing mothers. An emergency nutrition plan has been discussed with the Regional Health Bureau (RHB). The plan would involve support to existing health facilities and establishment of outreach programmes in 12 hotspot woredas as well as deployment of mobile health teams to two woredas without functioning health services. Limited reporting is frustrating efforts to gauge the scale and severity of the current crisis and to weigh up the most appropriate use of allocated resources. Partners of the Multi-Agency Nutrition Task Force have expressed interest in conducting rapid assessments in hotspot woredas but actual locations have yet to be confirmed. Bure Mudaytu and Semurobi woredas have been identified as first priority locations for future assessments. Save the Children US have expressed an interest in supporting interventions in Bure Mudaytu and Dalifage woredas.

Tigray: Therapeutic and Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programmes have been established in 13 out of the 15 hotspot woredas. Only two hotspot woredas are currently without treatment programmes for children with SAM beyond TSF for management of moderate acute malnutrition. According to ENCU, reporting rates from therapeutic feeding programmes sites have improved. Between the 4th and 10th October, 156 new admissions were reported based on information received from 20 out of 26 OTPs and four out of six TFUs. Atsbi Wanberta woredas in East Tigray Zone and Hinatal Wajirat and Samre Sharti woredas in South Tigray Zone registered the highest number of new admissions in the region.

Somali: DPP and the Regional Health Bureau have endorsed a list of 14 hotspot woredas. Eight out of the total number of formally endorsed hotspot woredas have no Therapeutic Feeding Programmes for the management of SAM (Aware, Gunagedo, East Imi, Shilabo, Bokh, Danot, Geladi and Ferfer). Reports indicate that 177 children have been admitted for treatment of SAM in Fik and Hamero woredas neither of which are on the list of formally identified hotspot woredas. ENCU expects an improvement in reporting rates in the coming weeks as well as scale-up of coordinated response to the nutrition crisis following the establishment of the Regional ENCU.

Health:

Three new woredas have reported outbreak of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) as follows: W Amacho, North Gonder Zone in Amhara Region, Dukem woreda in East Shoa Zone, Oromiya Region and Tsegede woreda in North Western Tigray. The new reports bring the total number of woredas reporting/ expected to report active cases to 31 in Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNPR and Tigray. A team from WHO and RHB are investigating reports of suspected AWD cases in Tach Armach woreda in North Gondar and Awebal woreda in East

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Gojjam, Amhara Region.

WHO has provided US\$42,000 to the RHB in Tigray to support the training of 100 clinicians on management of AWD and 500 health extension workers on disease monitoring, referral, reporting and community mobilization. WHO also provided US\$8,200 to RHB in Oromiya to resource training of 100 health staff on AWD epidemic preparedness and response.

Gaps and Requirements

There is an urgent need to scale-up coverage of therapeutic and targeted supplementary feeding programmes in hotspot woredas without services. Interventions to prevent the further spread of AWD need to be stepped up.

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

Key Issues:

Drought continues to represent a serious threat to people and livelihoods. Some showers have been received in Somali Region, however, rainfall has not been sufficient to alleviate shortages. According to UNICEF, there is a general shortage of water across Afar Region and water-borne and diarrheal diseases are on the increase in Elidar and Erbti woredas. Communities in Erbti woreda have no access to safe water and are reliant upon salty river water and, where possible, purchase of water at local markets. In Tigray Region, an estimated 19,400 people face critical shortage of water in A/Wenberta woreda and S/Ts/Emba woreda in addition to 78, 185 people in H/Wajirat and R/Azebo woredas.

In Somali Region, UNICEF has supported the training of 28 electromechanical experts as part of wider efforts to build the capacity of the Regional Water Bureau (RWB) to carry out maintenance of existing boreholes and water services. In Tigray Region, the RWB has rehabilitated four water schemes and mobilized one truck for water tankering operations in Raya-Azebo woreda where water shortages have reached critical levels.

Gaps and Requirements:

Water tankering interventions are urgently required in Warder, Korahe and Degehabur Zones in Somali Region.

Food Aid

Key Issues

The revised Humanitarian Requirements document identifies some 6.4 million beneficiaries in need of emergency food relief in the period October to December 2008. WFP is supporting government efforts to deliver food to those in need of assistance, however, considerable resource shortfalls persist.

In addition to mounting a response to the existing crisis, government and partners are looking forward to project and plan for future needs. A number of partners are working on an estimation of the impact of the June to September weather on crop yield for the fourth quarter of the year. In SNNPR, Oromiya, Somali Region and Tigray, a 20% reduction of crop yield is expected. Crop yield reductions are also expected in the eastern parts of Amhara region due to poor performance of the *meher* rains and late and/or reduced planting of long cycle crops in connection with late start of the *belg* rains. The government is shortly due to conduct a multi-stakeholder assessment in November that will guide projection of humanitarian requirements for 2009. WFP and partners are urging the government to include an assessment of the needs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as part of the overall multi-stakeholder assessment.

WFP has commenced transport of food to the hubs in Somali Region. WFP continues to liaise with government partners and the military to secure authorization for staff movement within the military zones of operation.

Response

Relief²: Some 58,545 mt have been allocated to 1,025,030 beneficiaries in the Somali Region of which 46,856 mt have been dispatched to date. In SNNPR, 1,332,010 beneficiaries have been allocated 93,995 mt of which 89,852 mt have been dispatched. In Oromiya Region, 1,088,537 beneficiaries have been allocated 51,964 mt of which 49,652 mt have been dispatched. Some 1,332,835 beneficiaries in Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella and Tigray Regions have been allocated 49,456 mt of which 42,207 mt have been dispatched.

Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP): Between January and August 2008, 138,923 mt of mixed commodities have been allocated by WFP to 4,006,712 PSNP beneficiaries in Afar, Amhara, Harar, Oromiya, SNNPR and Tigray. To date 116,176 mt have been dispatched.

² Relief allocations/dispatches refer to mixed commodities of cereals, pulses, oil and blended food allocated/dispatched during January-August 2008.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme: As of 14th October the cumulative distribution over the period July to October is 13,295 mt of blended food to 477,282 people in Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNPR and Tigray Regions following the May-August 2008 screenings.

Gaps and Requirements

The total shortfall for the period October to December 2008 stands at 236,392 mt valued at US\$ 198.5 million. The total shortfall for relief operations is 228,939 mt valued at US\$192 million and Targeted Supplementary Feeding programme currently has a shortfall of 7.453 mt valued at US\$6.4 million.

Humanitarian Response Fund Update

Funding Status

- **Overall funds since January 2008: US\$ 49.9 million** (see list below)
- **Pledges in Pipeline:** US\$ 12.3 million (Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, DFID)
- **Funding In Hand:** US\$ 10.6 million

II) Allocations

- Since January 2008: **US\$ 39.9 million**
- Agencies signing MoU: **US\$ 5.2 million** (see table 1 for detail)
- Applications under review: **US\$ 7.9** (see table 2 for detail)

III) Donor Update

- **Contributions since January 2008: US\$ 48.5 million**
Donors

Ireland –	US\$ 1,392,758
Norway –	US\$ 1,939,834
Netherlands –	US\$ 14,864,834
DFID –	US\$ 19,812,058
Italy –	US\$ 857,233

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Sweden –	US\$ 1,919,948
Balance from last year -	US\$ 8,918,448
Misc –	US\$ 261,149

Humanitarian Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting	Location and Time
Monday 20 th October		
Tuesday 21 st October		
Wednesday 22 nd October	Health Partners Forum meeting	WHO Conference Room, 14.30.
Thursday 23 rd October	UN/NGO Humanitarian Coordination Meeting	UNDP Conference Room 7 th Floor, Old ECA Building, 10.00.
Friday 24 th October	UN/NGO Security Meeting	UN Department of Safety and Security, 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.