



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Crop Production and Water

Although the *deyr* rains (October to November 2008) have brought much relief in terms of availing pasture and water in Somali Region (potentially addressing concerns over livestock survival in the current *jilaal* (dry) season), their contribution in terms of reducing overall food insecurity was insignificant, notes the January DPPS/SC UK Food Security Update. The failure of 2007 and 2008 rains, led to low livestock reproduction rate and high mortality and miscarriage levels in the dry seasons (*jilaal* and *hagaa*) of 2008. Crop production, despite the *deyr* rains, was severely constrained by shortage of seeds, early cessation of the rains and floods in the riverine areas. Harvests were below normal in most parts of Jijiga zone; while crops in Kebribeyah, Southern Babile and Shinile zones have failed due to poor rains, notes the regional update. Additionally, pocket areas including some kebeles in Aysha and Bokh woredas that are currently dependent on water trucking interventions continue to face severe water shortages. In response to water shortages in the Region, the Regional Water Bureau constructed borehole in Bokh woreda of Warder zone and the Ogaden Welfare and Development Association (OWDA) is constructing cisterns for rain water harvesting in Kebridehar woreda and hand-dug wells in Degehabur woreda with support from UNICEF. In addition, within the framework of the integrated Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) schools project, construction of cisterns in seven schools in Gode Town has been finalized. Humanitarian partners with support from UNICEF are also undertaking construction of hand-dug wells, latrines and water points in primary schools in Jijiga, UNICEF reports.

The unseasonable rains in early November 2008 benefited late planted crops in most parts of the country, however, they have not significantly improved crop yields in some eastern parts of the country. In East and West Harerghe zones of Oromiya, production yields obtained from this year's *meher* crops, including sorghum and maize, are very low compared to average production rates, according to CARE's latest food security and Livelihood Update. Sorghum and maize normally contributed for 55 percent and 88 percent, respectively, of the total seasonal production in the areas. For more information contact: srs.earlywarningdepartment@yahoo.com, getachewm@care.org.et, kmcdonald@unicef.org & info@dppc.gov.et

Food Aid

WFP reports that 74 percent of the November Relief allocations have been dispatched countrywide as of 20 January 2009 including Afder and Liben zones in Somali Region which are covered by the Disaster Management and Food Security Sector (DMFSS). A total of 54,379 MT of food commodities were allocated for December 2008 for all regions. Available monitoring report from Somali Region indicates that 4,047 MT of food commodities have been dispatched to the region thus far.

WFP continues to face resource shortfalls for 2009 for Relief 345,876 MT (US\$ 290.6 million), Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) 54,655 MT (US\$ 47.2 million), Targeted Supplementary Food (TSF) programs 41,710 MT (US\$ 36.1 million) and Urban HIV/AIDS 10,039 MT (US\$ 8.7 million). Meanwhile a total of 154,977 MT of mixed commodities comprising 117,492 MT of cereals, 5,000 MT of pulses, 26,715 MT of blended food and 5,770 MT of oil are expected to arrive in the country from January on. Currently, the total WFP in-country stock stands at 55,933 MT including 15,664 MT in hubs in Somali Region, while DMFSS in-country stock amounts to 40,156 of which free stock is 7,547 MT. Available stock at the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve Administration (EFSRA) totals 111,179 MT as at 21 January 2009. The impact of resource shortfalls has resulted in reduced rations applied since July 2008. In addition, the November relief ration has excluded pulses and oil (the December allocation will contain all commodities, however, at a reduced ration). WFP further reports that the second quarter of 2008 post distribution monitoring survey indicates that households continue to engage in negative coping strategies in order to meet their basic food needs. The survey reveals the strategies include selling a higher number of productive assets (44 percent), reducing the number of meals or quantity taken per day (92 percent) and borrowing food/money (69 percent). For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

HEALTH

In Afar Region, the Regional Health Bureau with financial support from UNICEF has conducted sensitization training on Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) in Yallo woreda; hygiene promotion and health education activities are currently being conducted in Gewane woreda. For more information contact: kmcdonald@unicef.org