



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Food Security

Food security prospects are currently promising in the western half of the country. WFP reports that the overall food security situation is stable in most parts of Oromiya Region, including East and West Hararghe zones, Harar and Dire Dawa. Crop harvesting is completed in most areas of the zones and livestock physical condition is reported to be normal. The current rains in East and West Hararghe zones have also helped in early land preparation for the *belg* crops to be planted starting March 2009, notes CARE. In addition, grain prices in most woredas of Oromiya are showing a declining trend. Reports from the joint WFP/FEWSNET mission in SNNPR in the root crops *enset* (false banana) and coffee growing areas conducted in early February indicate that, current *meher* season crop production shows better yields than last year in all the areas assessed, reports WFP. Furthermore, the onset of the 2009 *belg* rain in North Shewa and Oromiya zones of Amhara Region was timely and will likely contribute to the enhanced production of *belg* and long cycle crops, and improved water and pasture availability.

Water shortages, however, continue to be reported from parts of the country including Afar (Elidaar, Erebt, Berhale, Kori and Bidu), and Somali (Degehabur, Korahe, Fik, Warder, Gode and parts of Shinile zones). For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org & getachewm@care.org.et

Food Assistance

WFP reports that in view of limited resources, the January 2009 allocations have been tentatively canceled. The prioritization committee agreed to dispatch full cereal and blended food rations to hotspot areas only and all beneficiaries would receive full pulses and reduced vegetable oil rations by two thirds. All areas in Somali Region are considered as hotspot. WFP further reports that the national relief requirements for 2009 amounts to 589,070 MT, whilst, resource shortfall for WFP inputs to relief is estimated at 333,729 MT calculated at 80 percent of the national requirements; WFP inputs to the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) 54,616 MT; Targeted Supplementary Food (TSF) 34,975 MT and Urban HIV/AIDS 10,039 MT. Meanwhile, 4.9 million people have been identified for emergency assistance in the 2009 Humanitarian Requirements Document. For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

Refugee repatriation

UNHCR recently reported that the 2009 repatriation operations have commenced on 14 February with the return of 158 Sudanese refugees from Sherkole camp, Benishangul Gumuz Region. WFP and FAO have provided re-integration packages consisting three-month food, seeds and agricultural tools. The returnees have also been provided with non-food items including blankets, jerry cans, sleeping mats, sanitary kits, mosquito nets and kitchen utensils. Repatriation operations had been temporarily suspended since May 2008 due to the rainy season. The report further indicates that the Agency expects to resume repatriation of refugees from Fugnido camp in Gambella Region shortly. According to the plan, nearly 6,000 refugees will be assisted to return to South Sudan before the onset of the rainy season in May 2009. For more information contact: gegziabk@unhcr.org

HEALTH

Two new cases of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) have been reported from Moyale woreda of Borena zone in Oromiya Region on 8 February 2009, the Regional Health Bureau reports. Continued presence of risk factors such as poor quality of water supply, inadequate health services in some woredas, poor sanitation and hygiene and inadequate food safety practices contribute to the persistence of the epidemic in the country. Moreover, the risks of AWD outbreak due to recent rains in some parts of the country continue to increase, WHO reports. Priority Intervention includes adequate access to health care, sanitation and potable water supply as well as good hygiene practices. Strengthened surveillance and case management activities and pre-positioning of drugs and medical supplies should also be reinforced. WHO continues to provide technical support to regions to strengthen surveillance, early warning system, assessment of AWD response and on the job training of health workers to improve the quality of AWD management.

Meanwhile, no suspected cases of meningitis have been reported during the week, WHO reports. As part of the preparedness plan for this year, vaccines, medical supplies and funds for training and supervision activities have been pre-positioned in high-risk regions. The main challenge remains to be delay in sharing of laboratory diagnosis results. For more information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int