



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Rain Forecast – February to March 2009

The February to May 2009 *gu/ganna/belg* rains are expected to be normal- to-above normal, according to the seasonal forecast of the National Meteorology Agency released on 5 February. Normal performance of the February to May rains is expected to improve availability of pasture and water in Afar Region, an area that faced poor performance of both the main *karma* season and the small *sugum* season in 2008. If the forecast holds and the March to May rains perform normally, it will be the second consecutive season of good rain in the southern seven zones of Somali Region and the neighboring lowlands of Oromiya. Production in the *belg* crop producing parts of the country is also expected to perform normally, improving food security of the *belg* dependent population. The rains are also expected to improve water and pasture availability and assist for planting of long cycle crops in *meher* crop producing areas. For more information contact: ethiopia@fews.net & wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

Market Update

A joint WFP and FEWSNET latest update indicates that despite the estimated 10 percent increase in crop production, cereal prices continue to be much higher compared to last year and to long term averages. According to the statistical bulletin of the Central Statistics Agency, the inflation rate in December 2008 was estimated at 44.4 percent (annual change based on the 12 month moving average), with food inflation estimated at 60 percent. The report indicates that inflation persists despite the resumption of subsidized wheat distributions by the government in urban areas (at Birr 350 per 100kg) and the release of old stocks into the market by traders in anticipation of the *meher* harvest. Meanwhile, the Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions' (CFSAM) report indicates that cereal and pulse production during the *meher* 2008/09 season was about 10 percent above last year's post harvest estimate. According to the report, this is the fifth consecutive season of good *meher* harvest with total cereal and pulse production estimated at 18 million MT, including 17.4 million MT from the *meher* season and a forecast of 0.6 million MT for the *belg* 2009 season. For more information contact: ethiopia@fews.net & wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

Food Assistance

The national relief requirements for 2009 stands at 591,503 MT. WFP inputs to the Relief (planned at 80 percent of the national requirement-budget revision in process) are short of 296,718 MT (US\$248.1 million); WFP inputs to the Productive Safety Net Programme fall short of 54,616 MT (US\$47.2 million); Targeted Supplementary Food shortfalls are 34,975 MT (US\$30.3 million). For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

HEALTH UPDATE

Rabies Outbreak in Somali Region

A rabies outbreak in Somali Region is expanding, with reports of 288 human cases and 19 deaths in Afder and Gode zones. The outbreak covers a very large area, including all of east and south Afder, most of central Gode, neighboring Somalia and the border area with Koraha zone. All types of domestic animals have been affected. A total of 477 animal cases were reported from Afder zone, with unknown numbers in other woredas. All information on cases is being consolidated at Gode Hospital. DPPB has mobilized relevant government partners in both zones to kill affected domestic animals and conduct awareness raising campaigns. All NGOs are also conducting awareness raising activities in their areas of operations. FAO is mobilizing funds to procure vaccines for animals and human vaccines are requested from UNICEF and WHO. For more information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int & ocha-eth@un.org

Measles and Meningitis

Federal Ministry of Health reports indicate that a total of 1,414 cases of measles have been reported from Siraro woreda of West Arsi and Chiro woreda of West Hararghe in Oromiya Region, WHO reports. In SNNPR, despite a decrease in area coverage, measles cases continue to be reported from Boricha and Awassa Zuria woredas, UNICEF reports. Case management and monitoring are strengthened. UNICEF continued to support the Regional Health Bureau (RHB) with technical assistance. The health bureaus are also conducting community awareness raising activities.

Three suspected cases of meningitis have been reported from Bahirdar city according to FMOH. The alert and epidemic thresholds have not been reached. Drugs, vaccines and medical supplies have been prepositioned in all high risk regions. For more information contact: kmcdonald@unicef.org & who-wro@et.afro.who.int

CERF ALLOCATES US\$ 10 MILLION TO ETHIOPIA

The Central Emergency Response Fund has allocated US\$ 10 million from the underfunded window. The fund has been designated towards the critical sectors identified in the 2009 Humanitarian Requirements Document and prioritized refugee interventions: US\$ 3 million for support to supplementary feeding; US\$ 2 million for food for refugees; US\$ 1 million for multi-sectoral priorities of refugees; US\$ 2.5 for emergency nutrition projects; and US\$ 1.5 million for support to agricultural and livestock activities. Agencies are submitting proposals for immediate response. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org