



Meher Harvest Prospects

Due to the late onset of the *meher* rains, which subsequently contributed to a delay in planting, *meher* crops in most places are still at flowering and seed formation stage and require additional moisture to reach full maturity. Although some light rains were received during the last week of September 2009 in Gambella, parts of Amhara, highland areas of Borena and some areas in SNNPR and Somali region, extended rains are required to ensure the availability of pasture and water for a longer period. Rains stopped early in many of the northern, north-eastern and eastern parts of the *meher* crop producing areas, raising concerns about crop harvest prospects. Additionally, the overall poor performance of the rains affected crop growth and stand that led to wilting and stunting of crops in several lowland areas of eastern and southern Tigray, parts of eastern Amhara, many lowlands of eastern Oromiya, the southern low-lying areas of SNNPR, and nearly the whole of Gambella. Meanwhile, the mid-*meher* assessment that begun on 28 September concluded this week and data analysis using the Household Economy Approach has begun. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

Localized Floods in Somali Region

The level of Wabishebele River has started to rise due to heavy localized rainfall — and will require close monitoring in the event that serious flooding occurs. WFP reports that some flooding has already begun in Afder zone and reportedly led to a number of livestock deaths. A joint UN mission comprising OCHA, UNICEF, WFP and UNDSS visited the affected areas. Some small floods also occurred in the lower basin of the river in Gode zone but with no negative impact on livelihoods so far. Meanwhile, the floods have rendered some roads impassable—commercial trucks are presently stranded in Degehabur unable to leave the area for delivery to other parts of the Somali region. The situation is being monitored closely by agencies and authorities in the region. The regional government, with support from partners, has developed a multi-sectoral flood contingency plan with which humanitarian response will be coordinated. Meanwhile, the heavy rains received between 12 and 14 October, particularly in Mustahil, Gode, Denan, Elkere, Charati, Guradamole, East Imi, West Imi, Dolo Ado, and Filtu woredas, have relieved the severe water shortages in the area, leading to the termination of water trucking activities. For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org & ocha-eth@un.org

UNHAS Faces Critical Funding Shortage

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), which provides transportation from Addis Ababa to the Somali Region – including areas that are not served by commercial flights such as Kebrebiyah, Warder and Gode – is critically short of resources according to WFP, which manages the service on behalf of the humanitarian community. Approximately US\$ 1.3 million is required to maintain current services through March 2010. In the absence of funding, UNHAS will be forced to reduce its service by up to 80 per cent by the end of October 2009, and risks eventual closure by November 2009. The suspension of the operation could seriously impact in the management and monitoring of humanitarian operations including some services rendered to the refugees. Each month, WFP reports that an average of 800 humanitarian passengers working for 40 organizations use UNHAS flights. For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

Akobo IDPs Response Update

Emergency response is ongoing to needs of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Akobo, Gambella Region. As of 9 October, a total of 5,672 IDP households have been registered in Akobo Matar and Akobo Tergol areas, according to a registration conducted by Samaritan's Purse. An additional arrival of 102 households (possibly from Sudan) has also been reported. In response, Samaritan's Purse and ZOA have distributed non-food items (NFIs) kits to the IDPs. UNICEF has supplied NFIs for distribution and scholastic materials to support emergency education intervention. UNICEF in collaboration with the Regional Education Bureau conducted an in-depth assessment to identify educational requirements of displaced students in Wanthawa. In addition, DRMFS/WFP has dispatched additional 215 MT of food to 17,420 IDPs, in addition to the already distributed 45 MT of food to 7,000 regular emergency beneficiaries in Tergol. Meanwhile, potential flooding of the Baro and Gilo rivers is of serious concern, threatening to hamper response activities to the IDPs as well as deteriorating the humanitarian situation in the region. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) Cases Declining

WHO reports that Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) is declining and the national case fatality rate is also sustained below 1 per cent. However, risk factors including absence of clean safe water supply, proper sanitation facilities, and movement of daily labourers coupled with very poor and overcrowded living conditions in the state farms and holy water sites continue to serve as possible foci of infection for AWD transmission within the regions. Furthermore, critical gaps in response include: inadequate lack of Case Treatment Center (CTC) materials and drugs in the other regions except Addis Ababa, lack of funds for operational budgets, inadequate protection of water sources, poor hygiene practices and trained health staff. Case detection and management also continues to be a challenge in CTCs located in remote areas where health workers have in-adequate experience in AWD treatment, preventative measures in communities also needs to be further strengthened. Meanwhile, UNICEF and partners are planning to convene a 'lessons learnt' meetings to document best practices for future response. The Emergency Health and Nutrition Research Institute, with support from partners, is developing a comprehensive guideline and a one year preparedness plan of action for AWD prevention. For more information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int & kmcdonald@unicef.org