



DROUGHT UPDATE-SOMALI REGION AND BORENA ZONE, OROMIYA REGION

The Somali Regional Disaster Prevention Preparedness and Food Security Bureau in its monthly food security update (January) reports that the overall food security situation in the region is aggravated by the progressing *jillal* or dry season. After the failure of the *deyr* rains the situation in the region has been worrying exposing 1.5 million people to emergency relief assistance. According to the report the peoples' coping/distress strategies are stretched to their limit with increased begging in the streets of main towns, over-selling of basic assets, slaughtering of weak animals and killing of calves and closure of local schools following decreased/failed attendance. Given that the worst time of the *jilaa* is yet to come and no rain is expected before April, the current situation is expected to worsen further into emergency. Water shortage has reached critical levels with 640,000 people requiring emergency water interventions. Meanwhile, after conducting a drought assessment, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began airlifting water storage tanks and medical kits to the most affected areas including Bare woreda in Afder zone, along the Wabi Shebelle River in the Gode zone and further north in Denan, Gerbo and Segeg. ICRC reports that the migration patterns are more chaotic than normal, caused by the difficulty to find substantial pasture. However, there is huge concentration of livestock along the Wabi Shebelle River. In addition, the assessment found pockets of vulnerable communities in East Imi that had been cut off from their livelihoods and assistance by an inter-clan conflict.

Preliminary results of nutrition surveys in Dolo Odo (Liben zone), Dolobay (Afder zone) and Denan (Gode zone) woredas reveal critical malnutrition. 20.1% GAM and a 1.6% SAM for Dolo Odo and Dolobay was recorded and a 23.5% GAM and a 2.9% SAM was recorded for Denan. The under five mortality rates are estimated at 2.40 and 6.69 deaths/10000/day for Dolo Odo and Dolobay and Denan woredas respectively. The situation is critical with diarrhea being the main cause of death for children under five. The overall health service is poor in all the woredas. Measles vaccination coverage is very low particularly in Denan where eight deaths have been reported. The surveys recommend complete and timely food distributions and implementation of OTP/TFP programmes in all the three woredas. The nutrition survey in Dolobay and Dolo Odo was conducted for the agro-pastoral areas and another survey is planned for the pastoralists. Save the Children UK and USA, in collaboration with the regional Disaster Prevention and Preparedness and Food Security Bureau, conducted the survey in Dolobay and Dolo Odo from 19-23 January. GOAL conducted the nutrition survey in Denan from 21-26 January.

Similarly in **Borena zone, Oromiya Region** the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate with reports of **serious malnutrition**. CARE in collaboration with the government conducted nutritional surveys in Dire, Teltele, and Moyale woredas in Borena zone from 18 January – 2 February 2006. Preliminary results of the surveys show the prevalence of 10% GAM and 1.1% SAM in Dire; 10.9% GAM and 1% SAM in Moyale; and 6.1% GAM and 0.3% SAM in Teltele woredas. Meanwhile, in response to the 13 meningitis cases reported in Teltele, the woreda's health offices have started providing meningitis vaccination for more than 43,300 people. The survey recommends the need to amend ration distributions that are not currently based on family size. It also indicates that the number of beneficiaries in the zone could double in the next two months from the number estimated in November 2005 by the multi-agency assessment team.

The Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) is currently transporting January food allocation for the 1.5 million beneficiaries in Somali Region and for the 155,000 beneficiaries in Borena zone. Food dispatches during January and early February have not been as fast as planned due to a temporary shortage of trucks; however, the availability of transport is currently improving with full deployment of the Ethiopian Relief Transport Enterprise (the strategic truck fleet of the government's DPPA). In addition to the full food basket of cereals, pulses and vegetable oil, WFP is providing fortified blended food for 35% of the beneficiaries considered to be particularly vulnerable. For further information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

EMERGENCY RELIEF DISTRIBUTION UNDERWAY IN BERHALE WOREDA, AFAR REGION

GOAL, in collaboration with the Afar Regional DPPB, will commence a three-month targeted supplementary food distribution for approximately 16,000 beneficiaries in Berhale woreda of zone 2 at the end of this month. This is in response to the critical malnutrition, which revealed a 19% GAM and a 2% SAM in October 2005. The finding was also confirmed by the multi-agency pre-harvest assessment mission in November 2005. For further information contact: santiagoc@goalethiopia.com

NEW CHILDHOOD VACCINES IN THE COUNTRY

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently reported that in July 2006 life saving vaccines against hepatitis B (Hep B) and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) will be included in the routine childhood vaccination series. The vaccines prevent acute viral hepatitis, chronic viral hepatitis, liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer) and Hib, which are serious threats to Ethiopian children. Despite high prevalence of these vaccine preventable diseases, Ethiopian children have not had access to these important vaccines. The combination of these vaccines, along with the routine vaccination series, is provided to children that are less than one year old. WHO also reported that there is adequate capacity to accommodate the new vaccines at federal and regional levels. For further information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int