



# FOCUS ON Ethiopia

MAY 2007



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Focus on Ethiopia is produced by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in collaboration with other UN agencies and partner NGOs. Focus on Ethiopia provides a monthly overview of humanitarian trends and activities in Ethiopia, as well as focusing on particular issues of interest. Send comments, suggestions and contributions to [ocha-eth@un.org](mailto:ocha-eth@un.org)

many including the regional president, illustrate the deterioration of the security situation in the region. Security has already posed a challenge for humanitarian response and access. In particular it has deterred efficient and timely AWD interventions.

Although the onset of *gu* rains was generally good in most parts of the region, they have been erratic, unevenly distributed and inefficient in parts of Fik, Korahe, Warder, Afer and Liben zones. A one month dry spell has been reported in most areas affecting the pasture and water availability both for human and livestock consumption. A water shortage problem in chronically water insecure areas of Geladi, Aysha, Filtu and Guuagado is likely to exacerbate in the coming months.

## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

### SOMALI

The food security situation in Somali Region requires close monitoring due to poor performance of *gu* rains and increased reports of Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD). Security is also of great concern in the area.

Incidences including the recent bombing in Jijiga and Degehabur zones, which killed 15 individuals and injured

During the month, AWD has escalated in most areas. Response has been poor with the deteriorating security situation. Out of the 27 woredas affected 14 continue to report cases. WHO is facilitating the re-activation of the AWD regional co-ordination. Moreover, in Jijiga town, a team comprised of the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH), Regional Health Bureau (RHB), Jijiga hospital laboratory and WHO confirmed the presence of AWD in the Sisters of Charity camp which hosts approximately 500 Somali



refugees. Absence of clean drinking water, poor sanitation, and a lack of community education programs have exacerbated the outbreak. A committee comprised of the RHB and partners has been set up to strategize the response in the camp.

Moreover, prevalence of malnutrition continues to be a concern in Dolobay and Dolo Odo woredas according to Save the Children US.

The livestock physical condition is normal. An unknown camel disease has continued to kill a significant number of livestock in Filtu, Moyale and Hudet woredas, Liben zone. The Zonal Agricultural Bureau supported by LIVA and PCAE has treated several thousand animals.

The terms of trade has deteriorated for pastoralists during the month, largely because food prices have risen and livestock prices have declined.

The number of asylum seekers crossing the border from Somalia has increased. A total of 4,000 asylum seekers have been residing in Kebribeyha and Hartishek woredas and as many as 16,000 in southern parts of the region including Gode, Afder, and Liben zones. To date, UNHCR has registered 1,500 refugees in Jijiga zone. There is a plan to relocate the new Somali refugees from Kebribeyah and Hartishek camps to a new site at Teferiber.

Meanwhile, UNHCR plans to strengthen its presence in the region with short term deployment of a ten person emergency team to Jijiga and Gode. The team that has been provided by UNHCR Headquarters will assist with the ongoing screening of newly arrived Somali asylum seekers. In Jijiga, the team will assist with the planned relocation of new Somali refugees from Kebribeyah and Hartishek camps to the new site at Teferiber. A new UNHCR office will be established in Gode, with six members of the team helping set up the office. Those stationed at Gode will conduct assessments and survey border areas in order to determine the presence of Somali asylum seekers in border areas.

### OROMIYA

The food security situation in Oromiya Region is deteriorating with increased reports of malnutrition.

The poor performance of *belg* and *ganna* rains has affected the food security situation in lowland woredas of Borena and midland and highland woredas of East and West Hararghe zones.

An extended dry spell in midland and highland areas has also exacerbated the situation.

*Belg* crops have been adversely affected by moisture stress. Delayed onset of the rains coupled with the prolonged dry spell contributed to the below normal *belg*

production particularly in Guba Koricha and Mieso in West Hararghe and Hitosa woreda in Arsi.

Stress indicators including malnutrition, forced migration and increased supply of fire wood have been reported in East and West Hararghe zones. Malnutrition has been reported in Meta, Daro Lebu, Mesela, Fedis, Doba Kurfachelle and Grawa woredas.

AWD has continued to be reported during the month. The majority of cases are reported from Bale, Borena and East Hararghe zones. The RHB funded by WHO trained 150 health workers on surveillance and AWD case management.



The Monitoring Sub Group of the Early Warning Working Group proposed immediate assistance for approximately 68,600 beneficiaries in seven woredas of the region following the findings of the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) led multi-agency verification assessment. The beneficiaries are from Chinaksen woreda (East Hararghe), Gedeb Asasa woreda (West Arsi), Sude woreda (Arsi), Jarso woreda (West Wollega), Abuna Gendebert, Meta Robe and Adaberga (West Shoa).

### AFAR

The food security situation in Afar Region is of great concern due to poor performance of the *sugum* rains and delayed transfer of safety net resources.

A recent rapid assessment mission highlighted a deteriorating food security situation for pastoralists in Zone 1, 2, 4 and 5. Chifra, Dewe, Telalak, Elidar, Dalifage, and northern parts of Dubti woredas are the most affected. Zone 3 was not included in the assessment due to good performance of the rains. The team was comprised of Regional DPFBS, line bureaus including Water Bureau, Pastoral office, Save the Children UK and Afar Pastoral Development Association (APDA).

Pasture and water availability are declining due to poor performance of the rains. Pasture is depleted in Dewe, Telalak and Dalifage woredas of Zone 5 and Chifra and Elidar woredas of Zone 1. Abnormal livestock migration – both in timing and direction is reported within the region including to Ewwa, Awra and Teru woredas and to neighbouring Amhara and Tigray regions.



Most *birkads* and water ponds have dried up causing severe water shortage for human consumption particularly in North West Dubti, northern and southern Elidar. People are travelling long distance to fetch water.

Crop failure is reported in six agro-pastoral kebeles of Ab'ala woreda in Zone 2. In addition, the team reported desert locust infestation in Ab'ala, Barahale and some kebeles of Dalol woredas of Zone 2. Tree locusts have also been reported in Eribt, Yallo, Awra, Ewwa and Mille woredas.

The nutritional situation is also of concern. DPPA is urgently mobilizing supplementary food following request from the regional Disaster Prevention and Food Security Bureau for a total of 32,230 beneficiaries in eight woredas. DPPA has also notified Food Security Coordination Bureau to resume transfer of safety net resources, which was halted since February. Save the Children UK is also conducting rapid nutritional survey in Chifra, Ewwa and some areas of Elidar woredas.

A new outbreak of AWD has been reported in Dalifage kebeles in Zone 5. An outbreak is also reported in Cheffa Valley where the Afar herdsman have migrated to Amhara Region. Moreover sporadic cases have continued to be reported in Zone 1 and 3. DPPA has advised the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Water Resources to undertake immediate action.

The physical condition of livestock is very poor and various diseases including pasteuriosis, CBPP, respiratory illness have been reported in all visited woredas. The regional Livestock Bureau is treating external parasites in Awra woreda and plans to extend the campaign to 29 woredas. There is, however, shortage of veterinary medicines in the region. The mission recommended for urgent animal health intervention and livestock feed to save breeding and lactating animals.



The terms of trade are not favourable for pastoralists. Livestock price has declined; while cereal price is increasing. In Telalak market, goat prices declined from ETB 140 to ETB 60 and cattle price declined from ETB 1,200 to ETB 800 compared to same period last year. On the other hand the price of wheat increased from ETB 200

to ETB 300 and price of maize increased from ETB 180 to ETB 280 compared to the same period last year.

Stress indicators including slaughtering of calves, tying of calves' mouths to minimize milk consumption and use of wild food has been observed among the pastoralists. School drop outs have also been reported in Chifra, Ewwa, Awra and parts of Yallo woredas.

The abnormal migration has caused conflict with host communities in Amhara and Tigray. Conflict resolution mechanisms must be in place to enable Afar pastoralists' access pasture and water in neighbouring regions.

#### AMHARA

Due to the erratic nature of the *belg* rains and previous poor *meher* production woredas in *belg* producing areas are in need of close monitoring and are of concern. In addition, AWD continues to affect the region.

The Regional Food Security Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (FSDDDB) conducted a rapid assessment on the 2007 *belg* season situation between 30 April and 17 May 2007. The team looked at the 2006 *meher* post harvest assessment and the 2007 *meher* season land preparation for long cycle crops.

The onset of *belg* rains were generally a bit early or on time in the region. The initial rain, however, was followed by a four to six week dry spell which both prevented continued planting of *belg* crops and affected the performance of crops already planted. The dry spell affected pockets areas in South Wollo and North Shoa zones where farmers were prevented from timely planting of *meher* season crops. Rains resumed again in March contributing to the recovery of *belg* crops and creating a conducive environment for land preparation and planting of long-cycle *meher* crops.

Since mid-April, the rains have discontinued. Further production prospects, however, are dependent on rains continuing in the coming months. Preliminary findings indicate that the erratic nature of the *belg* rains combined with production reduction witnessed at the end of the 2006 *meher* harvest, have rendered the following woredas of concern and in need of close monitoring: Gishe, Menz Gera Midir and Efratana Gidim of North Shoa zone; Sayint, Mekdela and D/Zuria of South Wollo zone; Lasta, Wadla, Kobo and Delanta of North Wollo zone, Bat of Oromiya zone and Sekota, Gazgibla and Dehana of Wag Hemra zone.

In addition, a serious food gap in Sekota and pocket areas of Gazgibla and Dehana woredas of Wag Hemra zone is intended to be addressed in line with the government's new approach to emergency relief through the 20 percent contingency fund of the PSNP. Resources have not yet been released and there are increasing concerns that the contingency budget may not be sufficient to cover the need.

In most woredas visited by the rapid assessment, the price of staple foods and livestock had increased as compared to



the same period last year. In Sayint and Mekdela woredas of South Wollo zone and Gishe and Menz Gera Midir woredas of North Shoa zone, however, prices had significantly augmented due to a shortage in market supply.

In general, the physical condition of livestock is good with no livestock disease outbreak reported to date. This is due to the improvement of water and pasture conditions as the result of the *belg* rains. Localized shortage of pasture, however, was reported in Gishe and Menz Gera woredas of North Shoa zone and Sayint woreda of South Wollo where the *belg* rains were insufficient to regenerate pasture.

Furthermore, AWD continues to be reported in the region with three woredas newly affected during the month. In Oromiya zone, the Zonal Health Office has distributed water treatment chemicals but has a shortage of drugs and medical supplies to adequately respond in affected areas.

### SNNP

The food security remains stable with reports of good *belg* crop production throughout the region due to favourable rains. Localized flooding, hailstorms and landslides, however, have been reported in some areas.

The *belg* rains have been timely and well distributed throughout the region boding well for water and pasture availability. A recent visit by WFP to some of the *belg* producing areas indicates that crop performance is uniformly good. While the *belg* rain has been beneficial for crop production, pocket areas of Bonke woreda, Gamo Goffa zone have been affected by landslides and flooding. The Zonal Rural Development Office estimate that a total of ten kebeles have been affected by landslides following heavy rainfall. Nearly 90 households have been displaced by the landslide and are seeking temporary shelter with relatives or at the church and kebele office. In addition localised flooding has displaced nearly 630 households from their farmland. A significant loss of potato and *enset* produce was also reportedly destroyed by the flood waters. The figures are currently being verified by the zonal DPPFS.

Increased prevalence of acute malnutrition has been reported by UNICEF from Bona woreda of Sidama zone. Between 20-27 May, GOAL, WFP and the Regional ENCU conducted a standard nutritional survey in 28 kebeles. According to preliminary results, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition was estimated at 16.4 percent with 3.2 percent severe acute malnutrition and 1.1 percent oedema cases. Aggravating factors include low vitamin A coverage and BCG coverage, AWD cases, inadequate pure water supply and general ill health of children. Twenty one deaths have been confirmed to date. Unfortunately, baseline data is unavailable as Bona woreda is a recently established woreda combining kebeles from Arebegon and Hulla woredas. The findings however were found to be significantly high as compared to the DPPA Nutrition guidelines 2004 but the crude and under-five mortality

rates remain below the emergency level for developing countries.

While malaria cases are increasing particularly in Konso woreda, AWD prevalence is generally decreasing. New cases continue to be reported in remote woredas such as Bore woreda, Bench Maji zone. As of 18 May, nearly 200 cases and six home deaths were reported in four villages located close to the border with Sudan and Gambella, where cross border tensions continue to create security concerns. The RHB has deployed staff to Bore for an analysis of the situation. In addition, Gedeo zone and Amaro special woreda remain affected. In Wenago woreda, Gedeo zone, the water bureau is providing treated water from the river through locally produced water treatment equipment.

Moreover, the risk of meningitis persists in the region. Due to a recent outbreak in Oida woreda, Gamo Goffa zone, UNICEF estimates that there is a total of five kebeles with a population of over 6,000 people currently at risk of infection. Over 4,000 of whom are eligible for vaccination. Requests from the Zonal Health Department for vaccines from the Regional Health Bureau are still pending.

The physical condition of livestock is normal. Incidences of black leg disease have been observed in three kebeles of Konso woreda. In addition, foot and mouth disease among livestock in Dawro zone has been reported.

### GAMBELLA

The ongoing return movements of those displaced by previous conflict have created humanitarian concerns in the region.

Return movements of IDPs from Itang to Akobo woreda and other areas in the west of Gambella Region continue. Jikany Nuer communities displaced by previous conflict with the Sudanese Lou Nuer are now among those returning to their places of origin with road transport support provided by regional authorities. Many Jikany Nuer are now stranded half way to Akobo due to logistics and accessibility issues compounded by the rains.



The regional government is now seeking assistance to find a way to transport them. The UN received an official



request for humanitarian assistance this month from the regional government. The requested assistance includes food and non-food items; animal and human health

interventions; seed support; WES and logistical support in returning the displaced back to their places of origin.

UN Agencies continue to be concerned about the humanitarian situation. Such large movements combined with the onset of the rainy season have increased fears of a potential disease outbreak along transit routes. Already a suspected AWD outbreak has been successfully contained by MSF Switzerland in Burubey.

IOM has pledged 3,000 quintals of sorghum and maize to be distributed by government for immediate use by returnees. UNICEF intends to provide NFI support for 500 families in Akobo including jerry cans, soap and plastic sheeting. In addition, the Federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) has allocated one month relief food to 11 woredas based on the recommendations of the verification assessment team that was deployed following the region's request for assistance. OCHA is currently considering applications to its Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF).

Action by Churches Together/Coordination Office (ACT/CO) in Geneva has provided US\$ 50,000 to their local implementing partner Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) to address the NFI needs of those affected by the Murle attacks.

UNOCHA PCI and PACT are working in conjunction with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Gambella Regional Government to bring together Lou, Jikany Nuer and Anywaa for peace talks aimed at finding a long-term sustainable solution.

### TIGRAY

A recent WFP rapid assessment to Southern Tigray zone, the only *belg* producing area of the region indicates varying levels of *belg* crop performance. While crop performance is good in Oflla woreda, it is satisfactory to below normal in Enda Mehone woreda and poor in Alamata and Raya Azebo woredas.



The Federal DPPA has allocated 324 tonnes of grain, 10.8 tonnes of oil, 32.4 tonnes of pulses and 34 tonnes of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) for 7,200 returnees in Zelambesa town in East Tigray zone for a period of three months. The returnees were displaced to Adigrat town during the Ethio-Eritrea border conflict and returned to their areas of origin

following the cessation of hostilities. They continue to face food insecurity as their traditional livelihoods and coping mechanisms have been interrupted by the unresolved border situation.

## NEWS

### ACUTE WATERY DIARRHOEA (AWD) UPDATE

During the month of May, the national weekly incidence of AWD cases decreased to below 900 cases per week. This is due to a joint response operation by government and humanitarian partners which has now contained the outbreak in 80 percent of affected woredas. Woredas that continue to need focus have now been reduced to thirty three. The ongoing occurrence of cases in these areas, however, continues to pose a challenge for preventive and control measures. Last week, 515 cases with 2 deaths were reported from 20 woredas. Focus areas include: Oromiya Zone in Amhara Region, East Harerge zone in Oromiya Region, Harari Region and Somali Region where the majority of cases have been reported in recent weeks. WHO, PSI and UNICEF are in process of establishing a Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage Network. This is a global WHO initiative that aims to promote household water treatment and safe storage to combat waterborne disease at the household level. For more information contact: [who-wro@et.afro.who.int](mailto:who-wro@et.afro.who.int)

## UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS

### In Addis Ababa

June 1	Targeting & Timely Delivery of Humanitarian Resources DPPA, 09:00a.m
June 1, 8, 15, 22, 19	UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30a.m (Open to all)
June 5	WASH Emergency Task Force Meeting, MoWR, 10:00a.m (Open to all)
June 5	Early Warning Working Group Meeting, DPPA, 10:00a.m (Open to all)
June 5	UN Technical Officers meeting, UN OCHA, 03:00p.m (UN-Internal Only)
June 7	Ad hoc UN/NGO Meeting, UN OCHA, 03:00p.m (Invitation Only)
June 13	Improving Weather-based Index for Livelihood Protection workshop, ECA Conference Hall, 08:30a.m (Invitation Only)
June 26	SDMT meeting, UNDP 09:00a.m (UN-Internal Only)

### In the Regions

June 19, 20	MSF-H Migrant & Resettler Workshop, Bahir Dar, Papyrus Hotel 09:00a.m (Invitation Only)
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