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Key Issues

- With the Government of Ethiopia in the lead, humanitarian partners are responding to the AWD outbreak in Somali region
- The speed and geographical spread of the outbreak coupled with poor sanitation and hygiene; limited access to water; logistical challenges; and low community awareness pose challenges to effective AWD response in the region.
- Germany pledges an additional US\$106 million (€100 million) for the Horn of Africa Drought response.
- About 79 per cent of planned cropland in SNNPR is cultivated and only 21 per cent planted, amidst mixed rainfall performance.

Back-to-back seasons of poor or non-existent rainfall in 2015, exacerbated by the strongest El Niño phenomenon on record in the same year, led to the worst drought in decades in Ethiopia in 2016. While the country continues to respond to residual needs from the past drought, below average rains in the southern and eastern parts of the country caused by the negative Indian Ocean Dipole have left 5.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2017. Some US\$948 million is urgently required to respond to the new humanitarian needs.

Government leading efforts to curb the Acute Watery Diarrhoea outbreak in Somali region

As drought conditions worsen in Somali region, an increasing number of Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) cases are being reported daily in the region, including some deaths. The risk of morbidity and mortality is particularly highest amongst vulnerable and malnourished children. At least 40 *woredas* across seven zones (of a total of 99 *woredas* in the region) are currently affected. The outbreak is reportedly spreading, including a resurface in Qoloji IDP sites in Babile where the Regional Health Bureau is re-establishing the CTC.

With the Government of Ethiopia in the lead, humanitarian partners are scaling-up response efforts. The Federal Ministry of Health has deployed some 1,000 health professionals drawn from the Ministry and other regions to support the Somali regional government. Meanwhile, to strengthen Government coordination systems, a team of international humanitarian partners, led by the World Health Organization (WHO), is now based in Somali region. The speed and geographical spread of the outbreak coupled with poor sanitation and hygiene; limited access to water; logistical challenges; and low community awareness pose challenges to effective AWD response in the region.

Germany pledges an additional US\$106 million (€100 million) for the Horn of Africa Drought

The German Economic Cooperation and Development Minister, Mr. Gerd Müller, has announced that his Ministry will provide an additional \$106 million (€100 million) in support of drought-hit countries in the Horn of Africa. This will bring the total fund provided by Germany to drought response effort in the Horn countries this year to 300 million euros. Mr. Müller noted that despite early warnings, international funds were only released after disaster strikes, and after many people have already suffered and lost lives and livelihood. The Minister stressed the need to establish a permanent United Nations Disaster Fund. Mr. Müller also visited drought-hit areas in Ethiopia's Somali region where some 1.7 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance; and called on European and other Governments to mobilize funds in support of the Government and the people of Ethiopia.

Belg land preparation and planting in progress in SNNPR amidst mixed rainfall performance

Of the 1,065,610 hectares of cropland planned for the *belg* season in SNNP region, about 79 per cent is cultivated and only 21 per cent planted, amidst mixed rainfall performance. Given the late start and the overall poor performance of the rains so far, the crops are currently at the vegetative growth stage when they should have been at the flowering stage. At this rate, the crops require good and continuous rainfall through July/August to be harvestable. In addition, an Army Worm outbreak in several *woredas* of Bench Maji, Kaffa, Sheka, South Omo, Gamo Gofa, and Wolaita zones has further impacted the *belg* crops. Chemical spraying and other traditional measures are underway to control the crop infestation.

Near average to average rainfall was reported in midland and highland areas of Bench Maji, Dawuro, Gedeo, Guraghe, Sidama, Hadiya, Keffa, Kembata Sheka Tembaro and Wolayta zones. Meanwhile, the lowlands of Gamo Gofa, South Omo, Segen, Wolaita zones; Loka Abaya and Boricha *woredas* of Sidama zone; and five *kebeles* of Basketo special *woreda* registered below normal rains.

For further information contact: ocha-eth@un.org