

21 September 2015

Key Issues

- Funding gaps for 2015 will likely increase dramatically with the release of Government-led rapid needs assessment findings, expected no later than end of this week.
- The Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT) calls for a dual track approach that responds to 2015 needs and plans for anticipated 2016 needs.
- US\$237 million is needed to respond to the projected food and non-food needs **in the first quarter of 2016**.
- The EHCT issued an alert on the slow onset natural disaster caused by El Niño-driven slow-onset.

More people need food aid compared to earlier estimates

The number of people being assisted with relief food is believed to be significantly higher than what was identified by the July mid-year assessment, and officially published in the 18 August Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) mid-year review. In addition to the 4.5 million HRD beneficiaries and at least 400,000 people received ad hoc food assistance in Afar, Amhara, Oromia and Somali and Dire Dawa since mid-August. The humanitarian situation deteriorated as a result of the late and inadequate summer/*kiremt* (June-September) rainfall, which followed a failed spring/*belg* (mid-February-May) rainy season. Water sources were not fully replenished and pasture not sufficiently regenerated. Most farmers missed the short-cycle planting window, and those who planted saw their crops wilting or drying-up due to moisture stress. Weather reports indicated that *kiremt* rains improved since August in most parts of the country except in Afar, SNNP (Bench Maji, Segen and South Omo zones) and Somali (Fafan and Siti zones) regions.

A Government-led rapid assessment is on the ground to gauge the increased need

On 16 September, the Government body, Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector, called a meeting to launch a rapid assessment to gauge the level of humanitarian needs. On 18 September, 11 assessment teams, comprised of Government, UN and NGO representatives, deployed for a week long rapid assessment. Recommended areas to be assessed included, Afar (Zones 1, 2 and 3); Amhara (East Gojam, North Gonder, Wag Himra, North Wollo, South Wollo, Oromia and North Shewa zones); Oromia (Arsi, West Arsi, Bale, East and West Hararge, Dire Dawa and Harari); SNNP (Gamo Gofa, Gedio, Gurage, Ketu, Sidama, Silte and Wolayita zones); Somali (Fafan, Libe and Siti zones); Tigray (South and South Eastern zones). Separately, three teams that were previously deployed by the Federal Government to Afar, Amhara (East Gojam zone) and Somali (Siti zone) regions will join the multi-agency, multi-sector rapid assessment teams.

At present, US\$151 million is needed to respond to the food needs of 4.5 million people, and emergency needs in the nutrition, WaSH, health, agriculture and education sectors during the remainder of 2015. *The rapid assessment findings are likely to show a surge in humanitarian need and a corresponding increase in funding gaps.*

Early planning to mitigate the El Niño impact in 2016

Based on the analysis of data from National Meteorology Agency recommended El Niño analogue years (1997/98 and 2002/03) the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team developed a projection of 2016 first quarter needs to mobilize early action by government, partners, and donors. The document¹ was circulated to all stakeholders on Friday, 18 September.

The document emphasizes that funds are required no later than early November 2015 to ensure humanitarian commodities (food, nutritional supplies, emergency medical supplies) are procured and pre-positioned by January 2016, ahead of the projected spikes in malnutrition in February 2016. Affected areas include Afar, eastern Amhara, eastern Tigray, eastern SNNP, central and southern Oromia, and northern Somali regions. The projected 2016 first quarter funding need is US\$237 million. The cost of inaction is expected to be significantly more. For more information, contact ocha-eth@un.org

¹ Ethiopia slow onset natural disaster: El Nino driven emergency