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Key Issues

- Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund-supported projects are addressing priority needs in targeted drought-affected areas
- Pastoralists continue to settle in temporary sites as drought conditions deepen in Somali region

“This High-level event must express our total solidarity with the Ethiopian people and the Ethiopian Government at the present moment. And let’s be clear: that solidarity is not a matter of generosity. It is a matter of justice and of self-interest.”

United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres at the High Level Event on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia, 29 January 2017

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.

Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund-supported projects are addressing priority needs in affected areas

In support of the Ethiopian Government’s response efforts to the new drought in the southern and south eastern regions, the OCHA-managed Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF) allocated US\$17 million towards the 2017 humanitarian requirements. The fund was channeled towards projects addressing high priority needs in the nutrition, WaSH, agriculture and health sectors, as identified by an inter-cluster prioritization exercise. Of the \$17 million, \$6 million supported WaSH interventions in Oromia (UNICEF and Aciton Contre la Faim - ACF) and in Somali (Oxfam GB and Save the Children International) regions. Partners are also set to start emergency livestock intervention in Oromia, SNNP and Somali regions for \$5 million. Save the Children International, ACF, Islamic Relief, VSF Suisse and Mercy Corps will operate in Somali, while CARE, SOS and ACF will intervene in Borena zone of Oromia region. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) will support core breeding animals through provision of animal feed, animal treatment and livestock destocking in Hammer, Malle and Benetsemay *woredas* (Somali region).

Urgent and additional funding needed to mount a timely response

Despite on-going efforts by Government and partners, resources available to date are insufficient compared to existing needs. At least \$2.7 million is required per week to meet water trucking needs alone. Livestock deaths are being reported in Borena and Guji zones of Oromia region, South Omo zone of SNNP region, and in most zones of Somali region. The humanitarian context can quickly deteriorate without adequate and timely interventions.

Pastoralists continue to settle in temporary sites as drought conditions deepen in Somali region

Deepening drought conditions continue to erode and deplete the livelihoods of already vulnerable pastoralists in affected areas of Somali regions, particularly in Afdher, Dawa and Liben zones.

Livestock mortality is particularly high in Afdher zone, affecting all types of livestock, mostly sheep, goat and cattle. Mr. Abdi 'Abaade, a pastoralist in Hargele *woreda*, which was recently visited by an OCHA team said, “I had 25 cattle before the drought started. As of this morning, I have only six left.” Abdi added that the drought has also killed 70 of his sheep and goats. “Each morning a reduced number of livestock leaves the family corral for pasture,” he said in a crisp voice. In Dawa and Liben zones, the zonal administration noted that some 40,861 animals have reportedly died, including 29,955 sheep and goats, 8,034 cattle, 1,859 camels and 1,013 donkeys. It is the beginning of the *jiilaal* (dry) period and all signs indicate that more animals will continue to die.



Photo Credit: Muligeta Ayene

The predicted weak spring (mid-February – May) rains in the current drought-affected areas will likely further aggravate the existing situation, calling for preparation for a scaled-up response.

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