



# FOCUS ON

# Ethiopia

MARCH - APRIL 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)

## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

### OROMIYA

The food security situation in the region is reported to be normal due to the previous season's good crop production. A recent multi-agency verification assessment led by DPPA in four woredas of the region, however, proposed the need for immediate assistance for approximately 54,100 people.

The verification team reported that the situation in Jarso woreda in West Wollega zone, which was affected by hailstorms, and Abuna Gindebret, Meta Robi and Ada Berga woredas of West Shoa zone, which were affected by dry spell and landslide is dire and require immediate intervention. A total of 3,126 people in Jarso woreda and approximately 50,990 in the three woredas of West Shoa require immediate assistance starting from May to December. Provision of relief food including supplementary food, seeds and fertilizers are among the urgent recommendations. The team also recommended an immediate nutritional survey in the area.

By the third week of March, both *belg* and *ganna* rains have commenced. The *ganna* rains were reported to have commenced one week earlier than usual in Borena; while the *belg* rains in most areas including East and West Hararghe zones commenced up to three weeks late.

The late *belg* rains have affected both *belg* and *meher* crop plantation activities. The delayed *belg* rains and prolonged dry spells in February and March have led to anticipation of below average *belg harvest*. Nevertheless the rains have contributed to the replenishment of water points and the regeneration of bushes and shrubs used for browse. The current rains have also eased the serious water shortage that was reported in lowland areas of the region particularly



in pockets of Babile woreda in East Hararghe zone and Fentale woreda in East Shewa zone.

Apart for Borena zone, the physical condition of livestock was reported to be normal in most areas. According to a recent Livestock Market Bulletin by ACDI/VOCA, the physical condition of animals in Dubuluk and Haro Beke markets was poor due to shortage of pasture and feed. Most cattle were infected with ticks in Dubuluk market. In addition, CARE in its March publication reported that an unusually high rate of abortion among cows and sheep was reported in some kebeles of Miyo woreda, Borena zone. The Federal Animal Health Bureau has taken samples for testing.

The human health condition has been generally good with a declining trend of AWD in most woredas. Nevertheless, Bale and Guji zones continue to be areas of concern with reports of new cases. A preventative and control activities, however, are ongoing. A UNICEF and WHO team assisted the reactivation of health coordination committees in these zones. UNICEF assigned Health and Water and Sanitation focal person to the committee. In addition, WHO and UNICEF are supporting Bale zone with supportive supervision and training of CTC staff on case management. WHO supported training on AWD prevention, treatment and control for 40 zonal health officers in Goba town, Bale zone. Furthermore, UNICEF has also sent CTC kits to Bale and Jimma zones.

CARE in its March update reported that food grain prices (sorghum) have remained high in most of its reporting areas of East and West Hararghe, Borena and East Shewa zones. Livestock price have shown an increase in Borena markets compared to the previous months where demand for livestock was poor due to the impact of Rift Valley Fever outbreak in Northern Kenya and closure of major markets.

A team composed of UNOCHA and UNICEF visited Borena and Guji zones from 14-26 March 2007 to assess the humanitarian impact of recent clan clashes. The mission visited displaced populations in Arero, Moyale, and Dire woredas in Borena zone and Shakiso woreda in Guji zone. Among the adverse impacts of the conflicts are displacement, mortalities and disruption to livelihoods. The team briefed the regional bureau on its findings which included an assessment of needs for immediate relief assistance and continued close monitoring of the situation. However, no response has been undertaken to date.

### SOMALI

The general food security situation of Somali Region is reported to be normal with improved pasture and water availability. A recent DPPA lead verification assessment, however, reported the need for immediate relief assistance for the chronically food insecure population.

Despite an improved food security situation in the region, a recent verification mission proposed that a total of 758, 249 people in 30 woredas Jijiga, Shinile, Fik, Degehabur, Warder, Korahe, Gode, Afder and Liben zones require

immediate relief assistance. The team debriefed their findings to the Early Warning Monitoring Sub Group on 27 April. Apart from decline in livestock price, chronic water shortage in Geladi and Danot woredas of Warder zone and deteriorating pasture in Shinile zone, the team reported that there is no major problem in the region particularly in water and pasture availability. The DPPA reported that the Early Warning Monitoring Sub Group will review the findings of the mission and forward recommendation to the Early Warning Working Group.

The *gu* rains commenced in the third week of March and the performance has been good in most areas. While the good performance of last year's *deyr* rains has assisted livestock through the *jilal* (dry season), the *gu* rains are expected to further replenish water and pasture. A recent monitoring visit by WFP indicates that pasture is getting scarce in Shinile and Erer woredas. Moreover, a desert locust outbreak in parts of Denbel, Aisha and Afder woredas is further exacerbating the fear that pasture and browse availability will deteriorate unless immediate control measures are implemented.

Efforts by various actors, including UNICEF, WHO and NGO partners, along with local Health Bureaus, have continued to combat the spread of AWD. Renewed outbreaks, however, have been reported in Korahe and Liben zones. Approximately 70 health personnel from the region have been trained by professionals that took part in Training of Trainers supported by UNICEF, MSF-Belgium and IRC in March. WHO has allocated US\$ 21,290 to the Regional Health Bureau for essential drugs procurement, training of 200 health workers and relocation of health to more affected district to assist in case management.

Moreover, a recent nutritional survey by Save the Children-US revealed serious levels of malnutrition in Dolo Ado (Liben zone) and Dolobay (Afder zone) woredas. The survey indicated a 22.5 percent Global Acute Malnutrition and a 2.7 percent Severe Acute Malnutrition with aggravating factors such as high prevalence of morbidity and low vaccination coverage of BCG and vitamin A supplementation. Critical household food insecurity and inadequate clean water supply have also aggravated the nutrition situation. The verification did not provide strategic direction.





A recent Livestock Monitoring Bulletin by ACDI/VOCA indicated that although the physical body condition and health of animals is good in Moyale, Hartisheik and Jijiga markets, trade has been negatively affected by a ban on livestock imports imposed by the Gulf countries. The verification team also reported that 15 to 20 percent decline is observed in animal price in all visited areas. Meanwhile, there are reports of unusual migrations of cattle and camels to Afdem woreda of Shinile zone and neighboring Oromiya Region.

Security is tense in some parts of the region, following the killing of nine Chinese and 65 Ethiopian employees on an oil field in Degehabur on 24 April by armed men. In addition, the verification team reported approximately 5000 Somalia refugees are present in Warder zone since December. To date, UNHCR has registered over 1500 refugees in Kebribeya woreda, Jijiga zone.

### AFAR

The general food security situation in Afar Region remains stable despite the delay of *sugum* rains in most parts of the region.

*Sugum* (short) rains that normally fall between mid-March to late April, commenced late in most parts of the region with varied distribution and performance. Southern parts (Zone 3 & 5) including Gewane and Awash woredas received normal to near normal rainfall. However, no/limited rain has been received in Zone 1 and parts of Zones 4 and 2. The performance of the rain was poor in most parts of Chifra, Ewa and Awra and central Mille remained dry.

With the extended dry season in most parts of the region, water availability for both livestock and human consumption has significantly declined. Water points and shallow water wells have dried up. The problem is acute in parts of Elidar, Chifra, Ewa, Awra, Megale, Berhale, Dalul, Dalifage, Semurobi and Dubti woredas.

In addition, forage and pasture availability have declined in central and north eastern parts of the region. Consequently, early livestock movement mainly from parts of zone 1, 2 and 4 to adjacent regions of Tigray and Amhara has been reported. The situation is most serious in Chifra, Ewa, Elidar, and parts of Dubti woredas.

APDA in its latest update (3 May) updated reported that there are several pockets of animal disease outbreak that show the herd is under considerable stress. In addition, an unknown camel disease continued to kill camels in Yeldi grazing area in Mille woreda. Furthermore goats in Ewa are dying of chest infection.

During the months, the spread of AWD to new areas has declined. APDA in its update indicates that few and sporadic cases have been reported in Gewane,

Burededaytu, and Amibara woredas of Zone 3 and Asayita town in Zone 1. The findings of the joint government and humanitarian partners' assessment mission conducted from late February – to early March identified poor water supply and poor hygiene and sanitation services as major exacerbating factors. The regional government has endorsed the response plan and tasked the WASH taskforce with its implementation. UNICEF has identified various activities from the plan worth of US\$ 150,000 including sanitation and hygiene promotion interventions. APDA has constructed five community latrines and rehabilitated 10 water sources. In addition, it has deployed health workers in major affected areas. WHO has also assigned two consultants to the region. The consultants assist the Regional Health Bureau in assessing the situation in newly affected kebeles, coordinating health sector interventions and identifying gaps and priority actions in controlling AWD epidemic. Furthermore, DPPA/WFP also delivered more than 100 MTs of CSB for five woredas in zone 1 and 3 that are seriously affected by AWD.

In response to reports of malnutrition in Gewane woreda in February, the regional government and some NGOs have distributed fafa and NIDO milk.

Price hikes have been observed on both crops and livestock prices in some of the major markets. A recent Livestock Marketing Bulletin by ACDI/VOCA reported that the body condition of animals in Asayita and Chifra markets is good and supply of livestock in both markets has increased.



### AMHARA

The food security situation of the region is stable. AWD, however, has re-emerged in the region during the third week of April.

AWD has re-emerged in the region where it was previously contained a few months ago. According to a recent WHO update, Kemisie woreda in Oromiya zone has reported 10 cases since the third week of April. WHO has funded an AWD review meeting organized by the Regional Health Bureau that is planned to take place in May 2007.



Despite the unusually extended dry spell in February/March and a reduction of area planted under *belg* crop, the performance is generally reported to be satisfactory apart from pocket areas that encountered moisture stress mainly in the lowlands.

The high level of Global Acute Malnutrition in Dessie Zuria has continued to cause concern given that the survey was conducted immediately after harvest and the next harvest is not expected until July. DPPA plans to organize a joint verification assessment mission in the area.

### SNNP

The DPPA-led verification assessment mission that visited three woredas of Wolayita zone affected by hailstorm proposed that a total of 23,140 people require immediate emergency assistance. Furthermore AWD continued to be of great concern in the region.

Reports indicate that this year's *belg* production is likely to be below normal in most *belg* growing areas of region. Nevertheless National Meteorology Agency reported that most parts of the region have been receiving normal to above normal *belg* rains. In three woredas of Wolayita zone -Bolososore, Dugnafano and Damotpluasa- severe hailstorm caused significant damage to perennial crops like *enset*, sweet potato, coffee, avocado, and banana. A DPPA-led verification team reported that a total of 23,140 people require immediate food assistance for two months starting from May. Additional 6,000 people require immediate seed intervention. DPPA reported that the finding of the mission will be forwarded to the region for their immediate action. In addition, heavy rains on 23 March affected approximately 1140 households in Sidama zone. The rain has destroyed coffee, banana, pineapple and avocado farms in Dara and Chuku woredas. A team from zonal and woreda was deployed to assess the situation.

AWD has continued to be reported in Gedeo, Sidama and Silti zones. A WHO team visited the region in mid April and preliminary findings indicate that majority of the areas affected have no access to safe water supply and are located along rivers that are used as primary source of drinking water.

WHO is assisting the Regional Health Bureau in identifying gaps and priority actions in emergency response and preparedness for AWD. WHO in consultation with regional health officials has recommended training and relocation of health staff to address human resource shortages, increased provision of water purification products and community education in the affected areas. It has also provided US\$ 17,540 to the Regional Health Bureau for training of 450 health and relocation of health workers in affected Kebeles. UNICEF is also in the process of sending 30,000 bottles of Water Guard and more than six thousand sachets of PUR water purification chemicals to Gedeo zone in through Oxfam GB.

In March, approximately 700 Heads of Households (HHs) were moved from Badawacho, Duna and Soro woredas of Hadiya zone to be resettled in Dawro zone as part of the region's second round of resettlement this year. There are plans to resettle a total of 1500 heads of HHs this year. In addition, preparations are underway to move people to Gura Ferda site in Bench Maji zone as part of the third round.

### GAMBELLA

During March and April, Gambella Region witnessed intensified cross border incursions from the Sudanese Murle causing mortalities, casualties and widespread displacement. In addition, the DPPA led verification assessment mission in six woredas proposed that a total of 30,000 people that were affected by security incidents and flooding require emergency assistance.

In March, the Sudanese Murle attacked Belmikun, Lare woreda resulting in the death of seven Nuer pastoralists, 13 injuries and over 3000 raided cattle. All inhabitants of Belmikun village as well as those from six neighbouring villages were displaced due to fear of further attacks. Most are scattered throughout the woreda, while some have fled to Sudan. Cropped fields of sorghum and maize along the Baro River were completely destroyed. Approximately, 1,600 plastic sheets have been allocated by the Regional Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Food Security Bureau (RDPPFSB) for those displaced in Lare woreda, although distribution has not yet taken place. ICRC has given non-food support in the form of plastic sheeting to 230 of the most vulnerable households in Belmikun.



In addition to Murle incursions in Lare, in early April attacks were reported in Jor woreda. In the village of Angyila over 26 deaths, numerous injuries and widespread displacement occurred. Reports from ZOA Refugee Care indicate that those displaced have fled without any belongings as their huts and possessions were destroyed by fire in the conflict. Over ten local food stores and farmland were also devastated and over 100 cattle were raided severely impacting on livelihoods. The displaced, predominantly the elderly, women and children, were forced to flee to Chentua, the capital of Jor woreda.



In response, the RDPPFSB has distributed 300 plastic sheets, 300 quintals of maize, 50 quintals of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) and 720 mosquito nets for 177 households displaced. Other sources estimate much higher displacement figures indicating that there is a greater need. Unmet needs that have been identified include such non-food items as blankets.

The regional government has organized transportation of displaced Nuer that were seeking temporary shelter in Itang and Lare woredas back to their places of origin in Akobo woreda. Latent tensions between the Nuer and Anuak have also been reported.

In response to a request for assistance by the region, a DPPA-led verification assessment team visited six woredas (Lare, Jikawo, Gog, Jor, Dimma, and Abobo) and reported that security and flooding were the two major problems in the area. The team recommended for immediate peace building activity and protection of civilians as well as urgent provision of emergency assistance including food and non-food items mainly seeds for approximately 30,000 people.

The repatriation of Sudanese refugees continued in March and April with 14,064 refugees successfully returned to Sudan from Bonga, Dimma and Fugnido camps.

Furthermore, there are continued fears that AWD could re-emerge in the region with the forthcoming rains. So far, no new cases have been reported and preventative efforts are ongoing. WHO has allocated funds to train 70 health workers in the region. The Water and Sanitation taskforce continues to meet regularly on a monthly basis.

#### **DIRE DAWA**

On 12 April, following heavy rainfall, the city of Dire Dawa experienced flash flooding. There are no reports of casualties, as early warning messages allowed people to move to higher ground. Several houses and infrastructure, such as electric poles, water pipes, roads and flood protection walls, however, have been damaged leading to the displacement of some households and the disruption of services.

In response to the ongoing risk of flooding in Dire Dawa, over seventy representatives from government, NGOs and UN agencies met at the end of April for a two day consultation workshop organized by the Millennium office of the Dire Dawa Provisional Administration in partnership with CRS, CORDAID, Forum for Environment and ECC-SDCOH. The workshop entitled "Flood Risk Mitigation for a Better Dire Dawa" aims to draft an action plan for flood mitigation in the city and surrounding areas.

#### **TIGRAY**

With the exception of pocket areas of Hintalo Wajrat and Mehene that have encountered moisture stress, the overall performance of *belg* crop in Southern Tigray, the only *belg* growing zone of the region, is reported to be satisfactory. The *belg* crop yield, however, is likely to be

below normal as less than 55 percent of land usually cultivated has been planted by the end of March.

#### **BENESHANGUL- GUMUZ**

On 28 March 2007 the third and final voluntary repatriation convoy from Yarenja camp departed for Sudan with 494 refugees. This convoy brings the total number of refugees repatriated from Yarenja in March to nearly 1,500. The camp is the first of the five camps in Ethiopia hosting Sudanese refugees to be successfully closed since repatriation commenced last year.

Repatriation of Sudanese refugees is ongoing from Sherkolle camp, with nearly 840 refugees successfully returned to Sudan during March and April.

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## **NEWS**

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#### **ACUTE WATERY DIARRHOEA (AWD) UPDATE**

Currently seven regions are reporting Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) cases in Ethiopia: Oromiya, SNNP, Amhara, Afar, Harari, Somali and Gambella. Most cases are from Bale and Borena zones in Oromiya Region; Gedeo and Sidama zones in SNNPR; Zone 1 and 3 in Afar Region and Harari Region. Harari Region and East Hararghe zone are newly affected areas. Thousands of people living along rivers in Somali, Oromiya, SNNP, Gambella and Afar are at high risk. To date a total of 71 woredas out of 191 woredas formerly affected by AWD have been cleared of the disease due to measures taken by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), the UN, and NGOs.

Despite this positive progress, pressing needs still remain, including provision of safe drinking water, construction of sanitation facilities and community education. Access to affected areas could be a challenge with the coming rainy season. Most affected kebeles are in rural areas with poor communication systems. In addition, security problems have hindered effective and efficient response in some areas including Somali and Afar regions.

In order to contain the AWD epidemic in Ethiopia there is a need to increase efforts on safe drinking water supply, improvement of sanitation and community knowledge on hygiene issues. The immediate actions should focus on the provision of water purification products, rehabilitation/maintenance of water supply facilities, construction and use of community and family latrines. Increased education on good practices including boiling of drinking water, personal and environmental hygiene are also essential. The medium term actions should be on construction of water supply system in rural areas by speeding the implementation of different water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH) projects.

Efforts by various actors, including UNICEF, WHO and NGO partners, along with FMoH and Regional Health Bureaus (RHBs), have continued to combat the spread of AWD. WHO has expanded its technical support to the



FMoH and the regions by seconding a support staff from Head Quarters for one month. The staff will assist the WHO Emergency Health Action (EHA) team in strengthening of the health cluster in the country, mapping health sector interventions and preparing the joint ECHO, DFID and WHO evaluation of the EHA country program. In addition, WHO has provided logistics support in delivering the Norwegian donation of emergency health kits to 8 RHBs in Oromiya, SNNP, Addis Ababa, Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Somali, Gambella.

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated US\$ 4 million to Water and Sanitation and Health for WHO and UNICEF to address AWD in February 2007. For more information contact: [who-wro@et.afro.who.int](mailto:who-wro@et.afro.who.int)

#### **CONCERNING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITIONAL SITUATION IN BONA WOREDA, SIDAMA ZONE, SNNPR**

A rapid health, nutrition and food security assessment in three kebeles of Bona woreda Sidama zone of SNNPR reports a concerning food security and health situation. The woreda is under safety net programme since March 2007, after Save the Children USA phased out its Community Therapeutic Care (CTC) programme in December 2006. It is also covered with the Enhanced Outreach Strategy programme. The findings, however, indicates that 3.7 percent of children are severely malnourished and eligible for Stabilization Center/Outpatient Therapeutic Programme (OTP). The only operational OTP site in the woreda has problems of logistics, management and organization. In addition, 13.3 percent of the children identified (n=42) are eligible for the Therapeutic Supplementary Feeding Programme; however the team did not confirm if they were included in EOS/TFSP program. The assessment recommends provision of RUTF, various antibiotics and Vitamin A drugs for the malnourished population. It also recommended the strengthening of the EOS, CTC, and PSNP programmes, which are all active in the zone. Moreover it recommends capacity building on logistics and training of health staff on Severe Acute Malnutrition management in the health facilities. Furthermore, standard nutrition survey using SMART methodology should be conducted to assess the severity of the nutrition situation.

The report also indicates that majority of the households are dependant on market purchase and do not have reserve food for the coming hunger months. Most farmers have sold their small animals to cope with the existing food shortage. Furthermore, there were reports of *Enset* and coffee disease outbreaks, which could exacerbate the situation. The situation requires close monitoring.

The rapid assessment was conducted by Save the Children USA, GOAL, and the Regional, Zonal, and Woreda Health Bureaus and Early Warning Departments lead by Regional ENCU from 18-23 April. For more information contact: [gugsaa@dppc.gov.et](mailto:gugsaa@dppc.gov.et)

### **UPCOMING AND ONGOING MEETINGS**

#### **In Addis Ababa**

May 4, 11, 18, 25	UN Department of Safety and Security Meeting, DSS office, 09:30 a.m. (Open to all)
May 8	Water Task Force meeting, MoWR, 10:00 a.m. (Open to all)
May 9	ENCU (Emergency Nutritional Coordination meeting), DPPA, 02:00 p.m. (Open to all)
May 10	Mapping Task Force meeting, UNOCHA, 10:00 a.m. (Open to all)
May 15.	HRF High Level Advisory Committee, UNCC, 10:00 a.m (UN-Internal Only)
May 29	SDMT Meeting, UNDP, 09:00 a.m. (UN-Internal Only)
May 31	Time meeting, DPPA 10:00 a.m (Open to all)