



Food Security Update

The latest WFP weekly report indicates that parts of the country continued to receive light-to-medium rain showers, outside of the normal rainfall pattern. These unseasonable rains have been beneficial in some areas, improving pasture and water availability and nourishing late-planted *meher* crops. In SNNPR, they have had a positive impact on root and tuber crops and in, in parts of Amhara, SNNP and Tigray (Raya Azebo woreda), are creating favourable conditions for preparing land in advance of the next *belg* (March to May) season. However, in highland areas of SNNP (Sidama KT and GamoGofa), the rains are negatively affecting late maturing and harvested *meher* crops.

The ongoing *meher* harvest is expected temporarily to improve food security in many parts of the country, with cereal prices remaining stable or showing slight declines attributed to the increased supply in markets from the ongoing harvest, as well as ongoing food distributions. However, the expected below-average harvest means that some areas are already showing signs of increasing food insecurity, including the lowlands of eastern Oromia, parts of eastern Amhara, eastern and southern Tigray and areas in the southern SNNP lowlands. Dispatch and distribution of additional food assistance, seventh round to all regions and eighth in Somali, is expected to be concluded by mid January. As of January 2010, Afder and Liben zones (Somali) have been incorporated into the WFP hubs-and-spokes system, expanding it to cover all zones in the region.

Meanwhile, severe water shortages continue to be reported in parts of the Somali Region, where the *jilaa* dry season has set in; chronically water-insecure parts of Afar; the lowlands of eastern and southern Oromia; eastern and southern Tigray and eastern Amhara (North Wello); and the lowlands of southern SNNP. The latest Afar Pastoralist Development Association report indicates that unseasonal rains were received in Barahale woreda (Zone 2) and in the western central woredas of Sifra and Awra woredas (Zone 4) and Adaar (Zone 1), while the northeastern woredas including Eli Daar and the southern parts of Gawani, Ami Bara, Awash and Dulassa (zone 3) remain dry. Early livestock migrations have been reported in parts of Afar, Oromia, Somali and Tigray.

WFP also reports that it has cut targeted supplementary food (TSF) rations by half for the first quarter of 2010 due to resource shortfalls in order to provide a supplement for all cases of malnourishment throughout the country. Anticipated new resources should allow for resumption of full rations to new beneficiaries identified in the upcoming screening in Afar, Somali and Tigray, as well as second round distributions in other regions. For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org & afarpda@yahoo.com

Nutrition Update

UNICEF reports that roll-out of Outpatient Therapeutic Programmes (OTPs) has increased in hotspot woredas of Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray. As of 24 December 2009, a total of 77.6% of the health posts in SNNPR, 41.4% in Oromia, 35% in Amhara and 27.7% in Tigray regions were providing OTP services, compared to the respective figures of 70.7% (SNNP), 36.6% (Oromia), 15.5% (Amhara) and 11.8% Tigray) at the end of September 2009. With UNICEF support, the SNNP Regional Health Bureau (RHB) conducted training on OTP rollout for 262 health extension workers between 18 and 19 December 2009 at Hawassa Health Science College and between 12 and 13 December 2009 in Arbaminch and Hossana Health Science colleges.

In Amhara Region, a zonal review meeting of the Therapeutic Feeding Programme (TFP) was conducted between 23 and 24 December 2009 in Kobo. The status of the TFP rollout was discussed and refresher training on the management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) was provided. UNICEF provided feedback on key issues, including delivery of supplies from the woreda to the health post level and gaps in following treatment protocols. A similar review meeting was conducted in Kombolcha town from 26 to 27 December 2009. Joint TFP implementation monitoring was undertaken in Gemechis, Doba and Chiro woredas of West Hararghe zone (Oromia) by the RHB, zonal health desk, CARE and the woredas health desks. For more information contact: kmcdonald@unicef.org

Health Update

Although new cases of Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) continue to be reported in Oromia and SNNPR, WHO reports that the number of cases is declining across the country. Response efforts are underway at the federal and regional levels to control the disease; WHO and UNICEF continue to provide technical support to strengthen disease surveillance, early warning system and case management. To support Amhara's efforts to mitigate an AWD outbreak during the religious gathering at Lalibela at the beginning of January 2010, UNICEF dispatched household water treatment chemicals sufficient to treat drinking water for more than 100,000 people during the celebration. Jerry cans and sanitation materials have also been distributed to improve personal hygiene activities and proper water storage/handling during the event.

UNICEF provided technical support while WHO assisted in technical and financial support to Ethiopia Health and Nutrition Research Institute (EHNRI) for a workshop on Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) to finalize the Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) guidelines with input from the regional health bureaus. The workshop also sought to support regional health bureaus in drafting their own EPR plans. The workshop was held at Nazareth/Adama (Oromia) between 25 and 30 December 2009, with representation from nine regions. For more information contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int & kmcdonald@unicef.org