



Price Update

The Government has announced a new adjustment to fuel prices for December, raising the price of fuel by 4.72 per cent for benzene (petrol) and 5.42 per cent for diesel (no change for kerosene). This is the fourth such price adjustment in 2011 (previous adjustments occurred in January, April and September). The decreasing price of staple foods, resulting from new harvest entering the market and the ongoing distribution of subsidized wheat by the Government, is expected to support the improving food security conditions reported in most drought-affected areas. However, the relatively high food prices and increased fuel prices may adversely affect the food security of the most vulnerable households, particularly in remote areas, as commodity prices are influenced by transport cost. For more information, contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

Food Assistance Update

As of 20 December, dispatch of the seventh round relief food assistance to some 3.9 million people stood at 91 per cent, including 99 per cent to areas covered by the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS), 95 per cent to areas covered by the NGO consortium Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP) and 81 per cent to areas covered by WFP (Somali Region). As of 27 December, the eighth round relief food dispatch, targeting some 3 million beneficiaries, stood at 47 per cent. For more information, contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

WASH Update

The late onset and below-normal *karma* (July-September) rains and the advent of the *jilaal* (October-February) long dry season in Afar region have led to early depletion of pasture and water sources. The prevailing drought conditions are expected to worsen in the northernmost parts of the region and lead to an increase in water trucking requirements in the coming month. Currently, 15 trucks are operational in Afar, benefiting 19,250 people. As previously reported, the remaining trucks (23) are deployed in Somali (13) regions, Tigray (8), Amhara (1) and Oromia (1). According to the new Oromia WASH Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP), which covers December 2011 to February 2012, water trucking requirements are expected to increase substantially in the region in the coming month. Some 153,458 people living in seven *woredas* of East and West Harerge zones are already affected by the current drought. By the end of December, predicts the EPRP, an additional 887,635 people in 34 *woredas* across six zones are expected to face acute water shortages and require emergency water rationing. For more information, contact: awesterbeek@unicef.org

Health Update

During the past week, four suspected cases of measles have been reported in Gamo Gofa zone of SNNPR, compared to 88 cases reported the week before in Keffa zone of the same region. WHO provided case management training for 13 health personnel in Keffa zone at the request of the Regional Health Bureau (RHB), and has revitalized the zonal and *woreda* level epidemic committees. The RHB has provided drugs and financing to the affected areas. Increased support is requested from health partners, who are insufficiently present in the affected areas. No new measles cases were reported from Warder (Somali Region), where a suspected outbreak was confirmed last week. Meanwhile, the measles and polio vaccination campaign has reached some 5.66 million children between the ages of 6 months and 15 years (93 per cent coverage), including 576,000 in Amhara, 1.1 million in SNNPR, 1.4 million in Somali, and 2.56 million in Oromia. Results from the last zones to be vaccinated in Somali Region (Degehabour, Korahe and Warder) are being compiled. The last phase of the campaign is expected to start in Afar and Tigray regions this week.

In East Harerge zone of Oromia, acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) preparedness and prevention activities have started ahead of the Kulebi Gebriel celebration, which will take place on 29 December. A multidisciplinary committee has been established with members from the zonal health, water and logistics departments and partners such as WHO and UNICEF. Elsewhere in the region, 110 cases of diarrhoea have been reported in flood-affected areas of Moyale and Dire *woredas* (Borena zone). Woreda health teams are working to strengthen case management and health education. Water treatment chemicals have been supplied to affected communities. In Amhara region, WHO has conducted a rapid assessment at Wonkishet holy water site in Dera *woreda*, where a festival will be held starting on 25 December, to gauge the level of AWD preparedness and preventive activities; gaps have been communicated to the Zonal and Regional Health Bureaus. This festival was the site of large-scale AWD outbreaks in 2007 and 2008; in 2011, some 20,000 pilgrims are expected to remain on site for 7 to 10 days. For more information, contact: who-wro@et.efro.who.int

Education Update

Preliminary findings from the *meher* assessment in Somali Region indicate that most schools, although functional, are poorly staffed and lack necessary education equipment and access to water and sanitation facilities. A number of schools in Afder (14 schools) and Gode (31 schools) have been fully or partially damaged by the flooding reported in September and November. The Regional Education Bureau (REB), UNICEF and other cluster members are mobilizing a response: UNICEF has dispatched five school tents and 20,000 students' kits to Gode zone for distribution and UNICEF and the REB are also delivering 43 school-in-a-box kits to schools in drought affected areas of Shinile, Ayisha and Afdem *woredas* (Shinile zone). In Beneshangul Gumuz Region, UNICEF has identified some 600 education personnel, including 108 primary school teachers and 52 Early Childhood Development teachers from Sherkole and Tongo refugee camps, for training in basic pedagogy, psychosocial support, disaster risk reduction and education in emergencies. For more information, contact: a.kitchingman@savethechildren.org.uk